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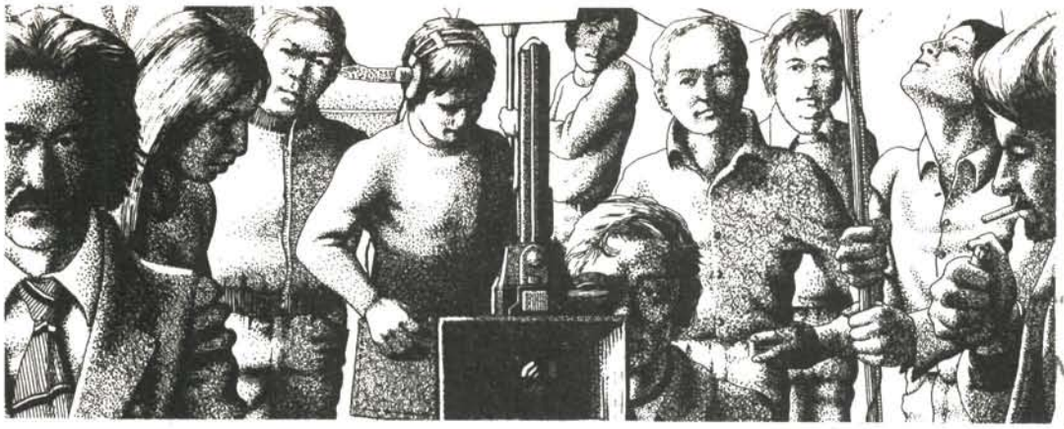
NEW STATESMAN



John McVicar

A new appeal for the prisoner Mick McMahon

NOV

How to murder a good television programme

Jeremy Bugler on TV's overstaffing

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The new Iris Murdoch

Britain and the Shah

Twenty-five years ago this week, with the connivance of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and the CIA, Dr Mous-sadeq's democratic regime in Iran was bloodily over-thrown. Those who, like Lord Chalfont this week, ponder whether Iranians are 'ready' for democracy, are so blinded by Shah-worship and sycophancy that they forget the long tradition of freedom in that country. They also obscure the fact that British complicity with the Shah, now being celebrated as our Chieftain tanks crush civilians in Tabriz and Isfahan, is not a recent or a shallow thing. Once again, our government and our arms-dealers (if there is any distinction to be observed between the two) have got us on the wrong side in a big way.

It has been felt necessary by the Shah's propaganda mill, and by its unpaid accomplices in *The Times,* to represent the Iranian dissident movement as a dour and fanatical thing, offering no hope of improvement. The improbable amalgam of 'Islamic Marxist' has been specially invented for the purpose (though, for instance, among the thousands of Iranian oppositionists in exile in the West, there is not one group which fits this descrip-tion). The fact is that many Iranians can remember better days and they are sick of the grandiosity and megalomania of a regime which puts Concordes into service while leaving the cities and countryside choked with poverty and neglect. Nor do they greatly care for the gigantic military establishment which has been wished on them – to say nothing of the pervasive network of secret police.

A country in which *Hamlet, Macbeth* and *Richard III* are all banned (in case they should encourage regicide) is a country whose intellectuals are likely to be disaffected too. In this great spectrum of discontent, the role played by religious fanaticism is a minor one. And in any case, the mosque in Iran has been a traditional haven for the common people in time of trouble. Religious leaders like Khomeini (now based in Iraq) and Shariatmadari are indeed hidebound by caste and tradition. But it is the absence of political liberty which really foments sectarian disorders, and if these do worsen then it is the fault of the Shah for defoliating the middle ground.

Of course, the Shah himself is not above appealing to religious prejudice. He has made a much-publicised pil-grimage to the Imam Reza mosque, and caused his glamorous wife to be pictured wearing a Muslim shroud. If he is serious about combating traditional superstitions then he has a strange way of proving it. In truth, he has been digging his own grave for a quarter of a century, by demonising all opposition as either Moscow-inspired or otherwise unpatriotic. The final judgment on his regime was issued a few weeks ago by Dr Ali Amini, the Shah's former Prime Minister and sponsor of his agrarian reform, who said: 'We have left behind us ten golden years which have resulted in the creation of a *nouveau riche*; making the wealthy wealthier and the deprived more deprived.'

Britain's role in this drama has been despicable. Under both Labour and Conservative governments, officials and salesmen have sprawled in front of the Shah's Peacock Throne. Not content with supplying his armed forces (30 per cent of the national budget and one quarter of a million men) with the latest and most expensive equip-ment – including electronic surveillance technology for the secret police – we have been over-obliging in our treatment of Iranian dissidents here. It is only a few years since Sam Silkin authorised a grotesque conspiracy charge against Iranian student protesters in London (a charge which was successfully ridiculed in court). And this week, Iranians with political asylum in this country have been refused re-entry by immigration officials exceeding their authority. When a new government replaces the Shah, it will have little to thank us for. Why is our foreign policy so largely determined by unelected opportunists in the Defence Sales Office?

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Notes on Politics and Power

A Welfare State for the rich

Frank Field writes: When there is so much talk about the country being over-taxed, it may come as a surprise to learn that well over half of total personal income is received without one penny of it finding its way to the tax man. The main mechanism by which the majority of personal income escapes any taxation is through the tax allowance system. Tax allowances – or sums which can be set against taxable income – constitute a lush welfare state for a minority of the population, distributing benefits worth twice those paid out in social security payments.

There is, therefore, a powerful case for revising what we think of as the welfare state. Tax allowances result in a loss of £26.5 billion of taxable income. But should all this sum be subject to tax? J. M. Willis and P. J. Hardwick think not, and in their important short monograph distinguish between structural and non-structural tax allowances (*Tax expenditures in the United Kingdom*,.Heinneman Education Books, £3.50). Structural allowances are defined as the main personal allowances, such as the single and married persons' allowances, the child allowance and double taxation relief. The authors view none of the other personal reliefs as an essential part of the tax structure treating them accordingly as tax expenditures i.e. a loss of revenue, which in 1973/74 was equivalent to a reduction of 7p on the standard rate of tax.

Some reformers would argue that this takes an unnecessarily conservative view of the tax system. For ironically, it was the Tories' Tax Credit green paper which began to change the whole debate about tax allowances. Since its publication there has been a growing demand for a careful examination of all the revenue lost by personal allowances, particularly the married person's and the wife's earned income relief. The debate has concentrated on whether these sums – accounting for a loss in revenue of around £6 billion annually – could be better spent if they were paid out as cash allowances, rather than as tax reliefs which automatically favour high income groups.

Where both sides would agree, however, is that the sums lost in tax revenue are now so large that the Government should present annually a tax expenditure budget as a twin to the annual white paper on public expenditure. A pledge to introduce such a budget would make a useful addition to Labour's election manifesto.

A tax expenditure budget produced along the lines of the one in the US would change the emphasis in the current debate about welfare and public expenditure. For example, much of the Conservative Opposition's time is given over to portraying the feather bedding of council tenants. Some attempts have been made to counter this by comparing the value of council house subsidies with the loss in revenue from mortgage interest relief. But this is less than half of the story. A tax expenditure budget would also detail the lost revenue from the abolition of schedule A and the exemption of owner occupiers from the capital gains duty. *Tax expenditures in the United Kingdom* gives details on both scores. If the old schedule A charge was reintroduced the authors estimate that an additional £930m would have been raised in 1974/75. On the top of this the study estimates the loss in revenue from exempting owner occupiers from the capital gains tax at around £1.8 billion. And to this total needs to be added the £1 billion of revenue lost in allowing the tax concession on mortgage interest. When the picture is fully presented we see that subsidies to council tenants amount to barely a quarter of those going to owner occupiers.

Cakes and ale

Christopher Hird writes: Next week the government starts investigating the proposed merger of Allied Breweries and the J. Lyons food group. It is going to be a tricky job.

The £60 million deal has already been branded opportunist and megalomanic by some City investment managers, who are trying to call a special meeting of Allied shareholders to discuss the deal. The merger is opportunist because Lyons are just recovering from a major corporate crisis. Hectic expansion financed by borrowed (mainly foreign) money, followed by a more rapid retrenchment has left them with debts of over £200 million and profits of only £6 million on annual sales of £800 million. If recovery is just round the corner, Lyons is a snip for Allied.

It seems megalomanic because Allied have nothing in common with Lyons except the products of both companies disappear down people's throats. Allied want to get bigger but monopolies legislation prevents them buying a brewery. They want to expand abroad and half of Lyons business is overseas.

Allied's own performance has been somewhat lack lustre: profits are not much more than they were five years ago, they have been losing market share, the lager market has not turned out to be the profits bonanza they (and most other brewers) expected. A recent Price Commission report expressed concern over the amount of time lost in industrial disputes and some of the problems caused by the company's size – this is now being put right by a management reorganization but the results are not expected to be felt for three years.

After the Bank Holiday Allied will be sending their formal offer to Lyons shareholders. This is the signal for the Office of Fair Trading to start an investigation to decide whether or not to recommend that the Prices Secretary, Mr Roy Hattersley, orders a reference to the Monopolies Commission. If he does, the deal is off.

There is virtually no industrial logic to the deal. Some defenders say that Keith Showering, Allied's chairman, has made his mark as a marketing man – getting people to drink Babycham – and this skill could be put to work in Lyons. Showering himself has said, more

vaguely, that he thinks Allied understand the distribution and production problems in food.

But the major argument in favour of the merger is financial: the debt ridden Lyons will benefit from being part of a larger, stronger group. Their management will not have to worry about bank managers, but can think about cakes. The jobs of 20,000 workers would be safer. Elsewhere in the City this card has been played with some effect: the National Union of Agricultural Workers are asking Hattersley not to refer Imperial Tobacco's takeover of egg producer J. B. Eastwood, because Eastwood say a reference would be bad for jobs.

It is certainly true, in a strictly financial sense, that Allied/Lyons would be much stronger than Lyons alone (though not as strong as Allied alone). But it has not yet been shown that Allied have any other qualifications for taking charge of this task. And it is not obvious that this increased financial strength will be used to make employment more secure. Allied will undertake to safeguard all Lyons jobs but they are not going to relax their standards of financial control, or put up with low profits. And until they see the Lyons books and business in detail, any undertakings can only be an expression of general intent.

Hattersley has no special love for Allied – he has made plenty of attacks on the big brewers – or for Lyons – Neil Salmon, Lyons' boss recently lambasted Hattersley for his control of tea prices. But earlier this year Hattersley decided against referring the takeover of brewers Shipstones by Greenall Whitley

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and now that the Monopolies Commission is investigating the Lonrho bid for Scottish and Universal Investments, its hands are pretty full. And if Allied play the security of employment card they may succeed in presenting Hattersley as jeopardising the jobs of thousands.

Linwood workers back Peugeot

Ron McKay writes: As speculation grows that rescue of Chrysler in Great Britain would be at the expense of the troubled Linwood plant, the workforce there is still solidly in favour of the takeover of the American corporation's European operation by Citroën.

The convener of the shop stewards, John Carty, said: 'Citroën have made some headway in the motor trade and it must give Chrysler workers confidence that they want to take us over. It gets on my wick when I hear suggestions that this takeover would mean the closure of Linwood. Chrysler UK is an integrated operation. It is absolute nonsense to suggest you can just lop off Linwood. If Linwood goes, Coventry goes.'

At present engines, fascias and lights for the Avenger and new Sunbeam are manufactured in Coventry and shipped to Linwood. Similarly, components made at Linwood are supplied to Coventry. Because of this interdependence the Linwood workforce believe that any potential buyer would have to take the Chrysler operation as a whole. Consequently they rule out the takeover of Linwood by the Scottish Development Agency to build a Scottish car.

'That's just not on,' Carty said. 'Where would you get the engines and other components that we don't make here? Talk about an SDA takeover is lunacy.' Similarly the Linwood men believe that incorporation into British Leyland, while desirable, is not feasible. The new Sunbeam car, they say, was designed for a European launch and Leyland do not have the assets for that. Without European sales, say the men, there is only the tiny British market, already saturated by small saloon cars.

New computer for Special Branch

Duncan Campbell writes: A new computer is shortly to enter service with the Metropolitan police to collate the political and criminal intelligence files of five branches of the force, including the Special Branch. In all, about 1.5 million people will be on it. By 1985 the number will have topped 2 million.

The Home Office has said the new system will store information about 'crime, criminals and their associates, and matters relating to national security'. The specification for the system details the number of personal files which each police unit will wish to store. Most of the files do not concern criminals at all, but their associates or just 'persons' of interest. The largest group of these latter files belong to the Special Branch: 1,230,000 files. The other sections include the National Immigration Intelligence Unit (files on about 29,000 people), the National Drugs Intelligence Unit (about 160,000), the Fraud Squad (22,000 companies and 45,400 people). Only in the case of one small set of files used by the Serious Crimes Squad is it stated that the people concerned are criminals. This is a file on 130 people.

Two years ago, the contract to built the computer was awarded to a British computer company, after a study originating in 1973. Exact responsibility for the project is with the Metropolitan Police, but it appears to come under the wing of a joint Home Office/Police agency for Data Processing, known as JADPU. This agency has taken the lead in pioneering the Police National Computer and experimenting with the present intelligence gathering exercise. As early as 1973, an ICL computer in their charge was pressed into service to record and analyse the personal records from the National Drugs Intelligence Unit. Since a primary source of information for all such collections is lists of 'associates' it was inevitable that even then, two-thirds of the records stored were on non-criminals. These were unfortunates who perhaps had two friends raided by a local drugs squad, generating a black mark by cross-referencing borrowed address books.

The computerisation of the extensive files of the Special Branch – which now cover about five per cent of the adult population – will add a new dimension to the effects of such intelligence gathering. Like the Police National Computer, it will unlock so-called 'suppressed demand' for inquiries from the national data bank at the slightest whim. The original specification for the Met's new computer demonstrates that – until effective privacy legislation governs such presently untrammelled initiatives – there are no limits the police planners will not exceed. Among the 'probable future developments' to the new centre is 'behavioural pattern recognition'.

Computer industry sources have identified the likely location of the computer as a new police centre at Jubilee House, an office block in Putney. At least two medium sized computers have arrived there unannounced in the last eighteen months. The police, naturally, refuse to provide further information on the project, 'on grounds of national security'.

John Hatch

The death of Mzee

President Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya was preparing to entertain his neighbour, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. Nyerere, the most humble of men, heard in his plane that a huge ceremonial welcome, replete with guards of honour and military bands, awaited him in Nairobi. He ordered his pilot to divert to the small airport on the other side of Nairobi. But the manoeuvre was detected by the control tower. Nyerere's plane was kept in the air for an hour while the whole entourage was moved across Nairobi. As the slight figure of Nyerere walked beside burly, bearded Kenyatta along the inspection line, the old man whispered to his junior guest, 'This is what we have been fighting for my son'.

This true story reveals something important about Kenyatta. The man who could defend female circumcision in 'Facing Mount Kenya' could also import pedigree bulls to improve his herd, transform Nairobi from a sleepy colonial town into a modern, American-style city, order modern schools, hospitals and roads to be built. Traditional and modern combined in the one man. He would alternately wear tribal robes and London University tie. But his single goal was to end British rule and lead an independent Kenya. Once that was achieved, he would adopt the trappings of British governorship.

Kenyetta was undoubtedly a great man. He was the symbol of African independence when 'white settler rule' indicated Kenya, not Rhodesia. Since the overthrow of Haile Selassie no-one else has represented that special African characteristic depicted in the appelation 'Mzee'. To Africans throughout the continent Kenyatta has personified that sense of 'ancient wisdom', the nearest I can attain to a translation.

Yet his wisdom scarcely touched social ideology. I sat next to him at the 1961 State Banquet for Tanganyika's independence. I had already known him for fifteen years, since the days when we all worked with him with Padmore, Nkrumah, Banda in London and Manchester. I tried to draw him on the problems which Nyerere faced in building a new nation rooted in social justice. He wasn't interested. For him Nyerere had won the battle by achieving independence. He intended to win the same battle in Kenya.

Kenyatta's great achievement was to heal the wounds between black and white after the brutalities of the 1950s. For a man who had been incarcerated for nine years after a trial in which witnesses were bribed and the judge paid £20,000 (as evidenced by Charles Douglas-Home's recent biography of Baring), this was a colossal triumph of the human spirit. It was made possible by his innate worship of land. When he found white farmers with similar emotions, they met on common ground.

Yet his passion did not lead him to a belief in an equal right to land – or other forms of wealth – for all his people. Odinga, Mboya, Kibaki, held ideologies; not Kenyatta. His fiercest critic, Kariuki, used to proclaim that Kenyatta had made 'ten millionaires and ten million paupers'. This was unfair exaggeration; but Kenya has certainly seen élite privilege mushroom since independence. And Kariuki was murdered without exposure of the culprits. Ngugi portrayed the discontent of the under-privileged in his writings. He is now in gaol without charge.

Kenyatta's Kenya has become a classic example of the Western 'trickle down' theory. Capital has been poured into the country; especially favoured by American capitalists. It is assumed that an increase in the National Product will eventually bring prosperity to the masses. There is no sign of the theory being vindicated in Kenya or anywhere else.

After Kenyatta, what? It has always been feared that when Mzee went the latent hostilities between Kenya's many ethnic communities would burst into violence. In particular, the Luo, who produced both the rejected Odinga and the assassinated Mboya, resent the dominance of the Kikuyu. But in Kenya, as elsewhere in Africa, tribes also contain rival communities within themselves. Violent resolution of the succession is not inevitable. Kenyatta's successor may even now be emerging from intra-Kikuyu conclaves. The strength of the present incumbent, Arap Moi, who was Kenyatta's deputy, is that he is not only a man of integrity, but also from the group known as Kalenjin. He might prove acceptable to both Kikuyu and Luo. What seems certain, though, is that whoever is chosen will face not simply tribal jealousies, but the more profound challenge of the growling demand for more mass equality and less élite ostentation.

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TV's industrial relations minefield

With high staff levels, restrictive practices and opposition to new technology, could TV suffer the same fate as Fleet Street? **Jeremy Bugler** investigates.

'We were struck' reported the Annan Committee 'by the warning which affairs in Fleet Street offer the branch of the media with which we are concerned. In days gone by, buoyant revenue from advertising and the low cost of newsprint led to toleration of overmanning and restrictive practices with the result that, when television reduced revenue from advertising, almost superhuman adjustments in labour relations came to be needed to re-establish satisfactory financial relationships.'

The question is: has British television contracted the 'Fleet Street Disease?' Independent television companies seem to be treading more or less the same path as Lord Beaverbrook in the thirties when he bid up the price of labour to drive out rivals, so mining the foundations of Fleet Street and his own *Daily Beast.* The fact that some television workers, on both sides, know what is happening adds only pathos to their progress.

Three main ingredients appear to make up this casserole: the very high earnings of the ITV companies, at a time when Government pay policy has made those earnings hard to pass on; the arrival of new technology; and 'increased corporatisation' as the programme companies settle into middle age. These ingredients produce a sub-culture which is not only distinct, as work sub-cultures tend to be, but is positively bizarre to anyone who stumbles in on it from outside. A producer fairly recently arrived from Fleet Street: 'This is the land of the Emperor with No Clothes. We are at a table, discussing a problem about a show. I suggest the obvious solution: Joe Soap take over from Fred Bloggs, if Fred Bloggs can't do it. Everyone around the table looks at me as if I'm crazy. They work out a solution that is ridiculous: it involves a lot of people wasting a lot of time, people hanging about, a huge expense of money. This solution, however, is often the only kind that works in television.'

For television, it is undoubtedly bad luck that its period of greatest prosperity has coincided with a prolonged policy of pay restraint from the Government. Advertising revenue has boomed in the last few years: from £149 million in 1974 to £231 million in 1976. (ITCA figures). The revenue from 1976 was up 30.74 per cent on 1975, and that for 1977 (£300 million) up 29.93 per cent on 1976. In 1978, revenue for the first quarter (£83 million) was up 28 per cent on that for the first quarter of 1977 (£65 million).

Advertising rates have gone up enormously in the seventies. Taking 1970 as a base of 100, the cost of television advertising reached 241.3 in 1977. The prosperous television companies are very prosperous indeed: Lew Grade's ATV comfortably beat its profit forecast for 1977, with pre-tax profits climbing to a record £13.7 millions from £11.6 millions. Turnover rose from £88.895 millions to £113.606 millions. As for this year, Lew Grade said in June: 'There is only one word for it – sensational'. Plainly much of ATV Corporation's profits come from such interests as Ansafones, and its film ventures, but the television company also coins it. Mr Jeremy Isaacs of Thames Television is said last year to have told his employees that the company was 'embarrassed' by the profits it was making. Not a Lew Grade feeling, for sure, but symptomatic of great money making nonetheless.

People who work in television have wanted, understandably, to take their share of rewards from the enterprise to which they contribute. Arguably, they have a stronger claim than the shareholders, who will gain by pay awards being held back. Yet while the coffers are bursting, the employees have been held back, at least theoretically, to the Government pay norms. They have responded like people in any other industry: they have tried to exploit the loopholes and other opportunities for earning more. In Fleet Street, reporters do it with their expenses. In the GPO, postmen do it by getting as much 'gobble' (postie's parlance for overtime) as they can, only a fraction of which may be spent actually speeding the mail. On the whole, this process of gaining money by the back door, while utterly understandable, is creating absurdities, and augurs very ill indeed for the future of ITV programme making and perhaps, given the upcoming amalgamation of the Association of Broadcasting and Allied Staffs (ABS) with the Association of Cinematograph Television and Allied Technicians (ACTT), for the BBC too.

Nothing illustrates the problems of the ITV programme makers better than routine hassles that go on when a programme decides to send a crew out to a location.

Current affairs and drama, filmed on location, represent good earnings to film crews. At a time of pay restraint, travel and location work are greatly desired, so much so that most television shops have a rota of sorts to enable film members to take turns at the pickings. While from one angle this system seems only fair, from another it can mean a film crew is sent to a distant location – perhaps South America – with members that are only there for the overtime. Thus some crew members are indifferent or even hostile to the subjects they are filming.

This is the trouble that Brian Moser and Granada's *Disappearing World* ran into in 1976, when he sent a crew out to Brazil to film the rites of the Umbanda religion. Filming had to be interrupted constantly for fear of running into overtime; some of the crew were indifferent to the people they were filming; the director and the crew spent a lot of time not filming but cabling back to London and Manchester for instruction from management and shop; with a full crew in a delicate situation it was hard for the director to get the trust of the people he was working with. In the end, filming was cut short and the crew brought home, when overtime claims threatened to become the Granada conglomerate's first venture into outer space.

Since then, Brian Moser has done no more filming, returning home empty handed after spending seven months researching in South America. He and his wife Caroline, an anthropologist, went to Brazil to make a film on urban slum dwellers. With their two small sons, they spent seven months in a primitive hut with no water and appalling conditions getting to know slums from the inside. But the film disappeared when the ACTT shop agreed to Moser's request for a light crew (only one cameraman and a sound recordist) but insisted that a PA be added. Granada management put its foot down.

Alan Sapper, general secretary of the ACTT, gave me his side of the *Disappearing World* dispute: 'The company assumed they could send a man and a dog there without agreement . . . Now Moser's a terrific man, I admire him enormously, he's like a Rembrandt in what he can do, but unfortunately he just doesn't fit into the modern world. If Moser was just Moser, all right, but other people would take advantage of this, and before you'd know where you were, they'd be shooting Mohammed Ali at Cannes with just an interviewer operating his own camera. You can't look at anyone in isolation in this.'

ACTT, in fact, often do agree to light crews to work in danger or 'hazard' zones, but there is a tendency to try to get a full crew paid, even if only a 'light' crew is actually going to work. Sometimes, the programme companies refuse.

In May this year, *World in Action* planned to do a programme that involved filming on a North Sea oil rig. The ACTT shop agreed to a light crew (one on camera, one on sound) but insisted that a full crew (two on camera, two on sound, plus a PA) be paid, though of course most of them would have stayed at their homes in Manchester. Granada management refused: the show was scrapped.

This *débâcle* had a precedent a couple of years earlier when LWT's *Weekend World* wanted to accompany Tony Crosland, then Foreign Secretary, on his tour of China. The Chinese insisted on supplying the film technicians. LWT's ACTT shop accepted this, but on the condition that a full crew be sent to Hong Kong, there to stay in hotels, for the duration of the filming. Once again, the show foundered.

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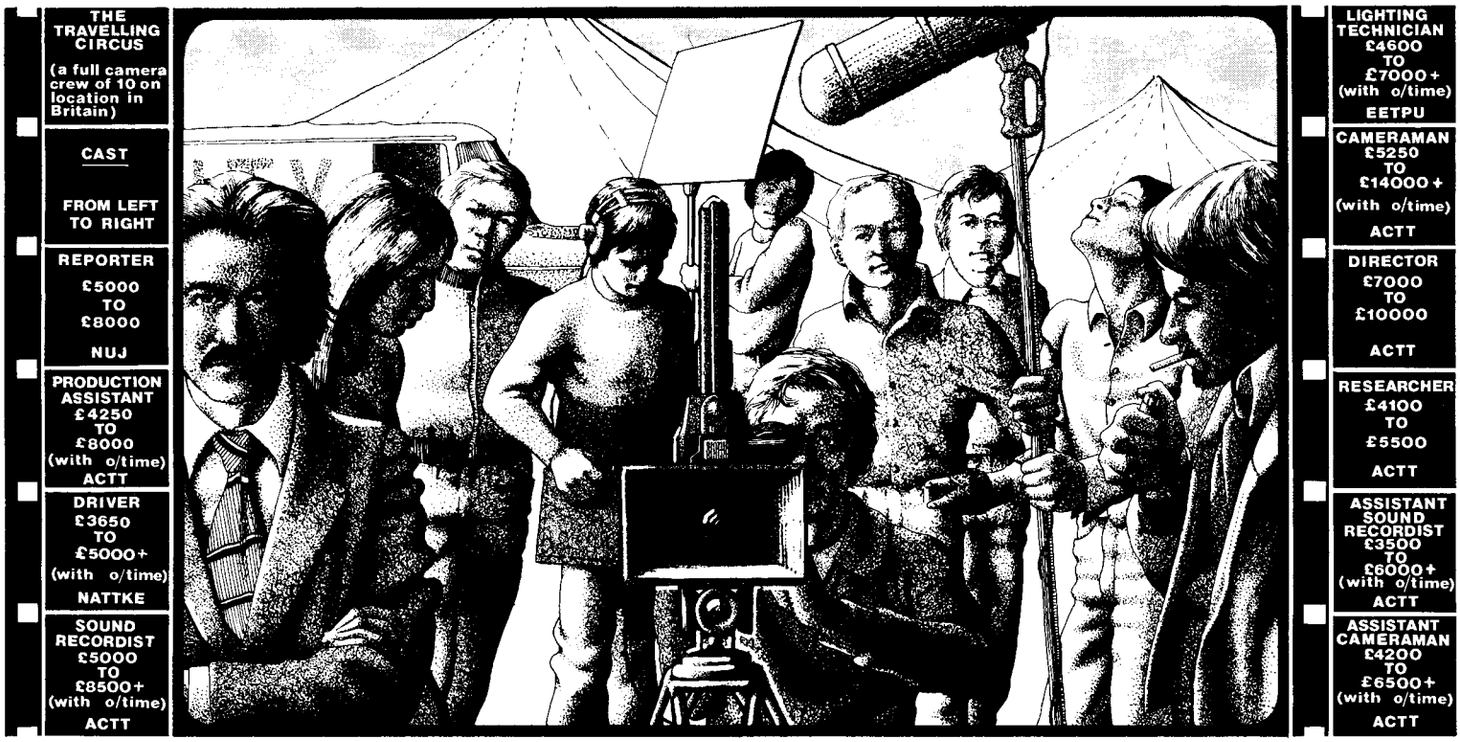
THE TRAVELLING CIRCUS
(a full camera crew of 10 on location in Britain)
CAST
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT
REPORTER £5000 TO £8000 NUJ
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT £4250 TO £8000 (with o/time) ACTT
DRIVER £3650 TO £5000+ (with o/time) NATTKE
SOUND RECORDIST £5000 TO £8500+ (with o/time) ACTT
LIGHTING TECHNICIAN £4600 TO £7000+ (with o/time) EETPU
CAMERAMAN £5250 TO £14000+ (with o/time) ACTT
DIRECTOR £7000 TO £10000 ACTT
RESEARCHER £4100 TO £5500 ACTT
ASSISTANT SOUND RECORDIST £3500 TO £6000+ (with o/time) ACTT
ASSISTANT CAMERAMAN £4200 TO £6500+ (with o/time) ACTT

Plainly, these incidents are the highly-coloured dramas of breakdowns between shop and management. But an almost unprofessional working relationship between directors and crews exists on countless shows. An LWT reporter: 'We are in Belfast. We have to film some Catholic community leaders, a difficult business requiring that we get their trust. Now it is *routine* in this kind of situation to find that the film crew want to break off. Why? Because they want to get to a first class restaurant the other side of town for their lunch break. Will they please help us and have a sandwich in the local pub? They will not.'

The spectacle of a large film crew trundling around a small subject is familiar. They are largest of all on Thames, who have an agreement to use a NATTKE (National Association of Theatrical Television and Kine Employees) driver wherever they go, plus two on camera, two on sound, electrician, a PA, a Reporter, a director and sometimes a researcher. Thames use a crew of this size for simple Vox Pop interviews in the street for programmes like *Thames at Six*. A Thames man says: 'So we'll have eight people there to film one guy. And these eight people will be wheeling around like a caterpillar so as not to get in shot. If the reporter isn't very alert, he finds himself interviewing his own crew.' Such a job, my informant says, could be done with four people, adequately.

Yet the pressure is still on to inflate crews further. Granada do not have to use a NATTKE driver on UK jobs (an agreement Thames inherited from Rediffusion) but the Granada management recently gave way to increase *World in Action's* crew. The programme had managed efficiently without a production assistant for over twenty years, but last year the Granada ACTT shop began to apply pressure to have a PA included. The ACTT shop argued that all other comparable current affairs programmes had PAs (true) and that the PA was valuable in preparing shot lists (lists of the shots filmed, for film editors), helping with language barriers, administering floats and so on.

The shop argued that Granada film editors had found the PA's shot lists invaluable. Granada management replied that they'd checked with film editors and this wasn't true. Because of the way the programme was made, shot lists were unnecessary. It cited a film made in Brussels before the EEC referendum. A PA dutifully made shot lists, which turned out to be of no use to anyone. The union was told that *World in Action* had been made on a crewing formula for many years with great success and that the nature of the programme had not changed.

Despite the robustness of these rebuttals, this year Granada management conceded the case, and now *World in Action* crews have an accompanying PA. Does this matter? It may well. It appears to be a clear case of bad management, conceding one case only to cause much more trouble by its concession. This became clear when *World in Action* sent a crew to Korea to film for two weeks. Because the PA is on a different pay schedule from the reporter, researcher or director, she gets the advantages of overtime. Thus it was that a young, relatively inexperienced girl came back from her two weeks in Korea with £800. The highly experienced researcher got £160 for his fortnight, and the producer/director pulled £300.

In July, the PA problem felled *World in Action* again. A show on the Rhodesian war was felled when the Manchester Live Shop insisted a PA be sent, despite an agreement that PAs should not go into hazard zones. The Live Shop evidently felt that the principle of the PA was pre-eminent over vital news of a nasty war.

At this point one can recall that more than half the ironwork in Fleet Street's bed of nails was put in by management. Primarily the responsibility for bad labour relations must rest with the management. As at least one Royal Commission has spelt out, trade unions normally respond to initiatives, or the lack of them, from managements. In Fleet Street, catatonic managements allowed absurd agreements on demarcations and manning to be struck partly because they believed that the gravy-train would never come to a stop, and partly because they were anxious to *increase* costs to make it harder for new rivals to break into the game.

So it is coming to be in television. ITV managements make agreements that are a showing of dragon's teeth and have often failed to look to the interests of their workers. Too preoccupied with getting to the end of their contract with a good case for renewal, they have neglected retraining, and in some programme companies allowed a deadening routine of work to be established. A Thames man: 'Being staff, you're used as a peg to go in a hole. You're on this programme one week, another the next. A staff cameraman may find himself shooting a kid's programme one day, a film sketch for the *Benny Hill Show* the next, then something for *This Week*, and then a few minutes for *Thames at Six*. Of course the poor sods find little meaning in any of it, and they fail to develop an interest in or a commitment to, a particular show. It's just another day on the pay wagon for them.'

Middle management in television came out badly in the Annan Report, and if Peter Bould, a Thames shop-steward is to be believed, middle managers in that company at least are middle-drawer too. Until relatively recently, labour relations in most TV companies were not taken seriously. In ATV, there is Lew Grade to deal with. 'We are making a show that Lew has sold to the US for millions of dollars. On the last day, the technicians ask for 5T (quintuple overtime) to finish it. No, says the first rank of managers. It goes upstairs. No, say the top floor managers. The show stops. Lew hears about it and says – what's the trouble?

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They tell him. He tells them: Look, this is show business. Don't stop the show! We've sold this for millions and you're talking about a few pounds for a few technicians. *Give 'em the money.* (Told by a former ATV shop steward.)

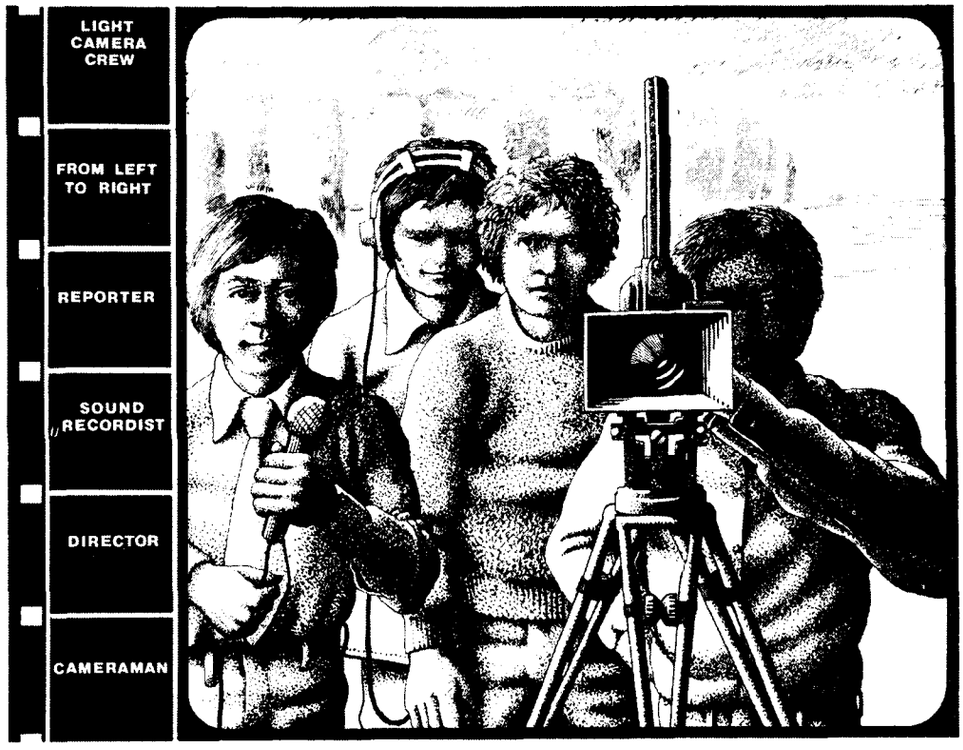
Producers and directors, the essential programme makers, are apparently getting downgraded. *This Week* directors on hazardous assignments frequently find themselves about the least well paid members of the film crew they control. Lighting cameramen can earn twice the salary of producers and directors. Their films are sometimes edited by film editors who find themselves earning fantastic sums if the editing includes much overtime work: a film editor on a Granada programme not long ago earned over £2,000 for two weeks' hard work – some of it paid at £18 an hour.

The overtime system in the ITV companies is regarded by one eminent programme-maker as 'an anti-productivity deal of the most disgusting kind'. Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) is usually the reward for 'creative' workers who work over the minimum week. Other grades get overtime rates. The very high overtime rates, in fact, can be defended as an intelligent union action designed to prevent exploitation of members. The rate for work between midnight and 2 am is double time and a half (known as 2½T), while some employees working past 2 am will get 5T. Programme makers complain about the effect of 'the ten hour rule' which (to simplify) says that at least ten hours must elapse between one period of duty and another. If not, the second period of duty is paid at the overtime rate of the last hour in the first period. And if the ten hour rule is broken again, the taximeter doubles up yet faster. 'This insane rule has had me trying to telex London from some remote place in Africa in order to get permission from Head Office to start filming at 7 am' says one ITV director.

Does this matter? Consider what television is for. It exists for making money, certainly, but for making programmes, primarily. That is its social justification. For that purpose were the ITV companies created by Parliament under the Television Act. Yet programme-makers face more obstacles when they turn to new technology to assist them.

Television's troubles, and the reason why it will repeat the Fleet Street chronicle all over again, are heavily interwoven with the arrival of new technology. The shift in television from film to video-tape is having extraordinary repercussions. On one level, it is encouraging a battle between ACTT film members and electronic technicians. A senior executive in one ITV company: 'Naturally the electronic men see the new technology as an escape route from the boredom of the studios, out into the real world with the sun on their backs, money in their pockets and lobster thermidor in their bellies.'

Video-tape seems likely to take over many film functions, being cheaper and quicker to use. One needs only to visit the United States to see lightweight video cameras being used for news and *verité* work that in Britain falls to a film crew. Since the ITV companies are not permitted to use foreign crews (unlike the BBC), you may occasionally see an ITV crew working in Washington for a routine event. The ITV crew will be a cast of thousands. The American electronic crew will often be a two-man crew (CBS-Chicago, for example). 'When I am on some job abroad, and I turn up with my film crew travelling circus, the Americans just fall about laughing,' one Thames man told me.



American amusement apart, the switch from film to tape is plainly a difficult matter, bringing opportunities to some and insecurity or even the sack to others. Wariness of new technology by the television unions is thus wholly understandable. More than that, new technology of itself is not desirable; it depends what it does. Cruise missiles, breeder reactors and reprocessing plants merit a lot more scrutiny from the trade unions that may work with them. But if one takes the evidence of Dr Boris Townsend, head of the IBA's engineering information service, new television technology may be benign: it should allow more programmes to be made more simply, by more people, more cheaply. In his IBA lecture 'Tomorrow's Broadcasting: the Technical Possibilities' that he gave this spring, Dr Townsend summoned up a near future in which the new technologies will make television more democratic and more available:

> First, any local community will be able to produce its own television news and local affairs programmes, and intersperse them with old films or even dramas shot in the neighbouring National Trust property. The small light-weight equipment, backed-up by magic black-boxes of electronics which remove all the picture defects of the tiny cameras and recorders, will be combined with cassette video recorders and video disc players to give us community television, using transmission frequencies in, or just above, our current UHF bands.
>
> Such community-television studios will be modelled on our successful Independent Local Radio stations, for it will be technically feasible to operate a television company with not much more equipment than one of our present-day ILR stations. Small in television will be beautiful, local, democratic and very profitable.

A pleasing prospect, but another IBA lecturer, Sir Denis Forman of Granada, brought the audience quickly down to earth:

> But today the engineers are light years ahead of the main body. They are asking us whether we want to go to Venus or Mars and we are not quite sure we can get to Wigan. This is because television is no longer made up of a band of enthusiastic pioneers but has become an industry with the problems of labour and technological innovation that are so well known elsewhere . . . So it is that Britain, for decades the world leader in both the art and science of television, is now rapidly sliding down the technological league. News-gathering with lightweight electronic cameras and the use of one-inch and half-inch electronic tape is almost universal in America. Here they are still a rarity. Digital editing of tape, common in many parts of the world, is by no means the general practice in Britain.

Two years ago, Robin Scott, deputy managing director of BBC Television, estimated that £2 million of new equipment was lying idle, blacked. Sir Denis Forman thought in March 1978 the total would then be £3 million: 'And if it is three million today it could be five million by the end of 1978'.

Such happenings greatly depress the programme makers of television. Barry Cox, Head of Current Affairs of LWT told me: 'A whole range of foreign reporting is going to disappear from the British portfolio of achievement. It's not just due to technology, but a lot of it is. A whole strand of documentary programme making will be taken over by the Americans, for tape is better than film for *verité* and they can use tape while we can't. So we have to use film, which costs much more. We will have someone like Roger Graef making one documentary a year, because of the cost, and the Americans will get four documentaries for the same money. The trouble is, the programme-makers care, but the viewers don't much, and the management

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doesn't, and nor do the unions.'

Many individual television workers, however, care what is happening, including shop stewards. I talked to a gathering of shop stewards in a windowless room at Thames Television. They educated me in the types of new technology already available, and how it would change people's lives at the studios: 'The engineers in TV are going to be absolutely redundant because the new technology has no need for the engineer. If the machine doesn't work, then throw it out or send to Maintenance.'

But redundant engineers, they said, could be found new jobs as the new technology needed new skills. Why then the reluctance to take the plunge? David Dale, an ACTT negotiator and former Yorkshire TV shop steward: 'We won't deny it. There's an opportunity now to scrap nearly all the job descriptions and demarcations and say: let's look ahead five years and see what we have to do to make sure that by then we'll all be very well paid and fully employed.' I understood him to mean television workers could, by abandoning a defensive attitude and accepting new technology, get jobs and money and a prosperous industry. But he added: 'It can't be avoided, this Fleet Street ending. Neither we nor the management have the capacity to act in advance.'

This techno-pessimism could bring to life the picture of television that Sir Denis Forman drew in his IBA lecture: 'If the log jam is not broken, new electronic equipment will pile up at studios all over the country. Some will be returned to the manufacturers, as has happened on past occasions, but the more sanguine managements may unpack it, even install it, and provide what might be called a museum of the future where the public might be allowed to see how television programmes might be made.'

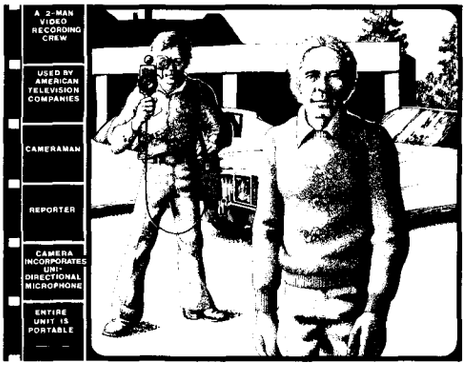
It would not be at all fair to say such a 'technology freeze' is just what ACTT is after, but Alan Sapper, its General Secretary, doesn't exactly exude confidence that new technology will benefit his industry: 'Two million pounds worth of technology lying around unused? Good! That's a victory for us.' Very properly, he advocates retraining programmes for television workers, and looks forward to a time when new technology will result only in shorter working weeks and earlier retirement for his members. Reasonably, he is also suspicious of the television company that tells him that new technology will lead to redundancies while at the same time making only 6 to 10 per cent of the material it broadcasts.

Sapper will get the warm support of many groups who are concerned about the uncritical adoption of new technology when he says: 'There'll have to be an international resistance to workers being rejected by new technology . . .' But in the context of television's new technology, Sapper's War would be a struggle by and large on the behalf of a few thousand television workers and against the interests of millions of viewers. For, harking back to Boris Townsend's prognosis, the new television will be accessible and very popular. People will want to watch it and the notion that it can be held back indefinitely is absurd.

The roots of ACTT's highly defensive attitude are surely in its association with the film industry. Even now it has about as many workers in the film industry and film processing industry as it has in television. ACTT's experience with new technology *vis à vis* the film industry has been brutish and nasty: deserted lots and the closing of Pinewood studios. Even while I was talking to Alan Sapper, he took a call about trouble at Technicolor Laboratories. He told me that the firm had just spent £3 million on new high speed machines and wanted to make 200 people redundant. They have 400 workers today, he related. They had 1,300 six or so years ago.

Sapper plainly carries this approach into the television field. ACTT's evidence to Annan included the view that 'VT cartridge machines were to be used only under "stringent restrictions imposed by the ACTT" to protect the film industry and prevent the possible collapse of individual film processing companies.' When I asked Alan Sapper what his union would do when, in a few decades in the future, television programmes are beamed direct into our sets from satellites he said: 'We'll launch killer satellites of our own.' A good joke, yes, but a fair clue too.

What Alan Sapper did not convey at all was any feeling that his union might gain more if it embraced the new technology, learned it and mastered it, and used it to



greatly expand British television. A management view, put by Robin Scott of the BBC is:

> The more lightweight video equipment you have, whether cameras or VT recorders, the more people you employ inevitably. When properly used, the more programmes you will make and the fewer programmes therefore you will repeat or purchase. This equation, though, does not work if there is over-manning.

Sapper's War will continue to be waged while the television companies have a virtual monopoly of advertising revenue and a duopoly of the viewers' television sets. But the media game will change. It will start, gently, with the Fourth Channel. (Hence ACTT's hostility to Annan's Open Broadcasting Authority and its advocacy of the channel going to ITV). It will grow as Britain gets more channels. (In Toronto two years ago I found my hotel television had 26 channels.)

Said Barry Cox of LWT: 'At the moment, we have an advertising monopoly of the TV set. But as soon as we lose that monopoly, as soon as we have real competition for the use of the set, then we are screwed.' He proffered the notion of independent production companies making cassettes with programmes packaged with advertising. In not many years, many people will be able to buy cheap-ish video cassette players. Conceivably, viewers could get a cassette service by post, perhaps almost free given the advertising. If the cassettes offered programmes that were better made, or more novel, or tougher, or (depressingly) went for that gap at the bottom of the market that *The Sun* exploits, then they could succeed. All they would have to do would be to offer more popular programmes, made more cheaply. When the television companies lose their monopoly of advertising Sapper's War will be lost.

Conceivably, the BBC could also act as a catalyst. If the ABS and ACTT amalgamate – they are voting on it as we go to press – television workers in both the BBC and ITV will find themselves represented by the new Amalgamated Film and Broadcasting Union. What will happen then? The BBC and the ABS are noticeably more easy-going in matters like crewing and demarcations (and, one might add, noticeably lower paying). BBC crews are smaller, they travel at less expense, they are less inventive over overtime. The BBC can hire foreign crews unlike ITV; it can do ordinary things like send a London crew out to Brighton for a day's filming without having to cough up overnight pay for the entire crew, as Thames have to do if their staff step more than a foot beyond a 20 mile circle of London. Producers and directors are much easier to recruit in the BBC. People can go from researcher to director in one bound, with none of the Byzantine hassle of getting an ACTT director's card.

What ought to happen following the amalgamation is a process of levelling up by each side. The BBC, according to the orthodox theory of labour relations, will find itself taking on the agreements and conditions that ACTT men in ITV have found most lucrative. Crewing will get heavy, no one will go to Brighton. ITV will garner the rare pearls in the ABS agreements. One senior ITV executive says: 'It depends on the BBC producers and directors. If they just look through the ACTT rule book and say – let's get hold of this! If they just forget their professional standards, then they, the BBC and television are sunk.'

The BBC should find it more difficult to duplicate some of the strange practices in ITV programme making. As a public body it is more open to reprimand. And it ain't got the money. BBC programmes are made against the tight ligature of the licence fee. A wholesale adoption of ITV 'atrocities' would simply napalm the BBC's programme making. Of course, the BBC does have 'atrocities' of its own, but not so many. One highly experienced BBC producer, a solid union man, told me: 'A couple of years ago, I would have said we'd have taken on the ACTT practices without a qualm. Today there's no chance. They know it would be suicide.'

If such a programme makers' resistance in the BBC should start up, abetted by vigorous programmes from the Fourth Channel, then perhaps there will be a cross-fertilisation that will bring more liberalism to ITV. I can't say that it is likely, but it is at least conceivable: ITV snatched back from the edge of the Fleet Street ditch.

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Roger Omond: A new 'legal' weapon for South Africa's police

The comparison drives Pretoria's *pro tem* masters up the wall, but there are more similarities than differences in the way South Africa and the Soviet Union treat their dissidents. The SA Special Branch and the KGB are equally fond of 'confessions' extracted under duress from political prisoners to prove guilt. The principles of Roman-Dutch law (in South Africa) and Soviet law have been cynically bent to suit the needs of those holding power.

South Africa's proud propaganda boast that its legal system was the finest and most independent on the continent has long been questioned. Judicial officers are promoted more for their loyalty to the party than for their legal wisdom. The Minister of Justice, Police and Prisons (the collection of titles for one man is not without significance) has not hesitated to overturn centuries of legal principle to maintain apartheid and power. As a barrister himself (although reputedly not a very good one), Minister J. T. Kruger has shown a disregard for jurisprudence that Stalin would have admired.

One of the more significant changes Kruger has wrought on South Africa's legal system is the Criminal Procedure Act of 1977. This has made the use of 'confessions' in court much easier, and together with stiffer sentences for political crimes, has narrowed even further South Africa's already-restricted freedoms. In terms of the old Act, confessions could be introduced in court, but the onus was on the State 'to prove that such confession was made freely and voluntarily by the person in his sound and sober senses and without having been unduly influenced thereto'. The new Act says broadly that the mere production of a 'confession' raises the presumption that it was made freely.

The onus has been shifted on to the shoulders of the accused who must discharge it through evidence. Considering that the accused has normally been held in solitary confinement, has no access to legal representation and is subject to the attentions of Special Branch, this is rather difficult. Considering also that regional court magistrates often are party loyalists who have no wish to rock the judicial boat and that they now have the power to sentence offenders to a maximum of ten years in jail, anybody who makes a 'confession' is now likely to find himself in prison for a rather long time.

There were some ritual protests when the new Criminal Procedure Act was introduced last year. But its practical application has only recently become clear to most South Africans. One such is John Jackson, an attorney (equivalent to an English solicitor) who fled last month to Britain. Jackson defended several hundred young blacks accused of political crimes in the restive area of Port Elizabeth. Theoretically, he says, a confession is usually made by somebody who wants to make a clean breast of things and is thus unlikely to have a change

John Jackson

of heart when he is in the dock. But almost without exception, defendants in political and quasi-political trials have come to court and pleaded not guilty, alleging they were assaulted, tortured, induced, intimidated, influenced and generally forced to make confessions by their interrogators, who are either CID police or the Special Branch.

Jackson estimates that 70 per cent of his clients in these political cases bore marks of assault inflicted while police were trying to extract a 'confession'. Once an accused has said his 'confession' was not made freely, a legal charade begins. The prosecution calls the policeman involved, who naturally denies any assault or threat. The Afrikaans-speaking magistrate', Jackson says, 'will reject the defendant's version of the force brought to bear in obtaining the confession and will rule in favour of the police on the basis of credibility, and label the defendant's evidence as "an attempt to discredit the good name of the police and/or security police".' So the confession is now admissible as evidence. 'It now only remains for the prosecutor to lead formal evidence of the occurrence of the incident and he has conclusively proved his case.' The accused trying to rebut the State's case by giving evidence himself has little chance of success: the magistrate has already made an adverse finding against him in accepting the confession. The mockery does not stop there. The accused, Jackson goes on, is convicted and then sentenced severely on the grounds that he has 'attempted to evade his guilt, attempted to discredit the police, and, in pleading not guilty, has shown no remorse or sense of contrition.'

This does, of course, make things a lot easier for the police. But even given all these advantages, they have still made mistakes. Jackson recalls two cases that stand out. In one, a police sergeant said that he shot the accused (whom Jackson was defending) during a stoning incident and that the youth had been wearing a yellow shirt and khaki trousers. Jackson got an adjournment and went, ironically with a police escort, to the youth's home. He later produced in court a pair of blue jeans and a blue shirt with holes that corresponded to the wounds inflicted on the youth by police bird-shot. The youth was acquitted. But the senior public prosecutor afterwards told the police to take possession of clothes worn by people shot during demonstrations.

In another case, a youth was alleged by police to have been shot during a demonstration on 14 August last year. Jackson produced hospital records to show that he had been shot on 14 October. Instead of throwing out the case, the notoriously biassed magistrate, A. S. McCarthy, who heard the majority of these political cases in a court set up inside a police station, allowed the State to change details of the charge to accommodate the new date.

For the police and a number of judicial officers, says Jackson, the ends justified the means. With the law so conveniently on their side, the police would extract confessions under duress to get the cases over as quickly as possible (thus obviating any need for old-fashioned detective work), hope that the accused would be unrepresented in court, and be confident that a pliant magistrate would impose severe sentences.

Other rules have been bent in the State's determination to jail blacks demanding rights. From the early 1960s, a number of political trials have taken place in remote platteland towns, far away from the offices of competent defence lawyers and equally far from the offices of newspapers which report such cases. Jackson says that during his time as the one lawyer most involved in Port Elizabeth political work, the police used to keep his clients not as normal prisoners awaiting trial in central jails, but in police cells at different stations. Often the police would not tell him when his clients were due to appear in court. Relatives were kept out of court: at the Algoa Park police station which was used for many months as a court, barbed wire fences prevented anybody the police considered undesirable from seeing how justice was being done. And, Jackson says, he was intimidated and harassed until he felt he could no longer stay in South Africa.

A South African barrister once remarked to me after an inquest into the death of a detainee under Special Branch custody that he wished, just once, that he could say what he really felt in court: it would be to the effect that everybody knew the proceedings were rigged, so why carry on the charade? Another barrister, in another inquest into the death of another detainee, said that if he told the press what he thought of the court's finding (that nobody could be held responsible for the death), he would never be allowed again into a court. Jackson found himself in a similar position, and this relatively unpoliticised white South African almost certainly will never practise again in his native country. What is significant is that the careful smokescreen around the South African judicial process is being blown away.

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Marion Lowe: God, Guts and Guns

The orange card advertising the Centre's services was sent out with the city's monthly mailing of A.D.C. cheques to mothers on Welfare. The wording was in English on one side of the card, Spanish on the other: 'For advice on a "problem pregnancy" contact the following number . . .'

My first client at the Centre, Monica, had telephoned earlier in the day having just discovered that she was pregnant. Monica had spent the past week in the County Jail and was out on bail. I asked her what crime she was thought to have committed, and by way of explanation Monica replied, 'They found a dead man in my apartment'. Somewhat non-plussed (might it be an offence to have a dead body lying around on one's property in Cleveland, Ohio?), my next question was: 'Did you know the dead body?' 'Oh yes,' was the unhesitating reply, 'It was my boyfriend'. And did the police believe her to be responsible for his death? Why, yes, she had shot him. The boyfriend had come in drunk one evening and they had argued. A loaded gun was lying on the table between them. He reached towards it. She beat him to it, and put two bullets through him.

Monica was pregnant by the man she had killed. It seemed reasonable to me that Monica should want an abortion. Yet legislation passed in the USA during the past twelve months denies the previously acknowledged right of women dependent on Medicaid health care to free abortion. As President Carter noted as he ratified the Bill: 'Life is not fair'. His contribution to its continued unfairness has been to allow Medicaid funds to cover only pregnancy terminations resulting from reported rape, statutory rape (ie where the girl is under the age of consent), incest, and where the mother's physical health would be endangered by the continuation of the pregnancy. Monica could not qualify for a Medicaid abortion under such criteria.

Two days after I first met Monica, Bridget came into the Centre. A year previously her husband had shot her through the stomach in a fit of pique: she was late getting back from the launderette and his dinner was not on the table in time. Three months after the shooting Bridget had come out of hospital. With four children to support, and no alternative accommodation to go to, she returned to her husband. Things went from bad to worse, and when her 'other half' informed her that next time he shot her she would not come out of hospital, she decided it was time to leave. By the time that she had made that decision, however, she was pregnant by him. Although Bridget had undergone major abdominal surgery only months previously, and was adamant that she did not want another child, she had been denied a Medicaid-funded abortion.

While we talked about where we could find the money for a privately-funded abortion – both Bridget and Monica did finally get abortions – Bridget's children were being looked after by her sister, Kate. Kate has one leg. The other leg was shot off one day when Kate, then aged twelve, was playing with friends in a burnt-out house. One of the kids found a gun in amongst the rubble, pointed it at Kate in play, and pulled the trigger. The gun was loaded. Kate now has a wooden leg.

Women like Monica, Bridget, and sister Kate live in a society where guns can be

bought and sold as easily as used cars. No gun control legislation has come near to being passed into American law. As the bumper-stickers on the back of Oldsmobiles proudly proclaim: 'America was made great by God, Guts and Guns.' Legislation restricting the carrying of guns is seen as an unwarranted intrusion on the liberty of the individual citizen. Laws which restrict a woman's right to control her own body are increasingly acceptable. The Roman Catholic Church invokes its members to save women from their own sinfulness in wishing to control their fertility. If only the same zeal could be re-directed to saving them from gunmen.

The author has just returned from Cleveland, Ohio, where she spent a year on an International Fellowship, attached to the city's Public Welfare Agency.

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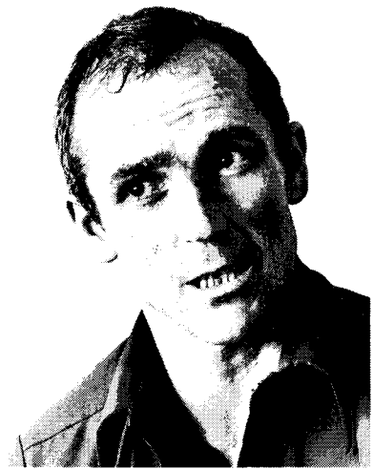
Justice for Mick McMahon

John McVicar, right, once dubbed Public Enemy Number One, has just been released from prison, after serving an eight year stretch, to start a post graduate degree. Mick McMahon is still in prison, serving a life sentence for a murder which he says he did not commit. Here McVicar tells the story of McMahon's attempts to get that conviction quashed and argues that British courts have treated him unjustly.



When I left Long Lartin prison a few weeks ago, Mick McMahon was booked to move into my cell. He is probably in there now and doubtless thinking of the same thing that I am at this moment: his case. He thinks about it a lot. But that is understandable since he has now served eight and a half years of a life sentence imposed for a crime that he insists he didn't commit.

Wherever I've gone since I was released, I've attempted to talk to people about the McMahon case. A lot of them have been only mildly interested but nearly all have wanted to know whether he was really innocent. At first I said 'Yeah, he's innocent all right. People like us live in a small world and you can't hide a thing like that. It is too easy to check out.' But then I realised that one of the main reasons why injustices like the McMahon case occur is that when people want justice they often want it so strong that they'll cut corners to get it: it is easier for an interested party to get a horse's mouth opinion from someone in the know than to plough through all the facts and arguments; it is easier for a policeman to 'fit up' a suspect who has been grassed than to attempt to convict him by the book; and it is easier for judges to reject a meritorious appeal because they 'know' the appellant is guilty than to adhere to the rules and quash the conviction.

So, in order to understand why justice would be served by the release of Mick McMahon, I must conduct the reader through a complicated skein of events. There is no other way – all the short-cuts are cheats.

Just after 6 pm on 10 September 1969, a four-man gang tried to rob a Luton postmaster, Reginald Stevens, of his shop's keys as he was getting into his car in a nearby car-park. One of the robbers blasted Mr Stevens with a sawn-off shotgun and he died almost immediately. The gang abandoned plans to rob the post office and made off in a getaway van.

Six weeks later Chief Superintendent Kenneth Drury arrested Londoner Alfred Mathews for the murder. Mathews confessed and made a deal with Drury: the charges against him would be dropped and he would turn Queen's Evidence against the other three members of the gang. He identified them as Murphy, Cooper and McMahon. They were subsequently arrested and tried for murder at the Old Bailey in March 1970.

The case against the three men hinged on the credibility of Mathews. The trial judge in his summing up said: 'It would be idle to pretend after having listened to this case for so many days that it did not really turn on Mathews'.

Mathews had told the jury a curious story. At about 2.30 pm, he said, Cooper, drove to see him in a red Mercedes and asked him to come to Luton to pick up some 'parcels'. On the way, they stopped on the outskirts of London to pick up a transit van and, with it, Murphy and McMahon, neither of whom Mathews had seen before. Around 6 pm, at Luton, Mathews was told by the other three to stand near a post office while they went in the van to pick up the parcels at the railway station. A few minutes later the van – now playing its 'getaway' part – pulled up. He jumped in and off they drove at high speed to two cars parked a mile or so away. In the van, the agitated Cooper, Murphy and McMahon argued (said Mathews) about killing someone during an aborted robbery. They dumped the van and split to London in the two cars.

Despite the scorn poured on this tale by the defendants' counsel, the jury believed Mathews and convicted Cooper, Murphy and McMahon of murder. Justice Cusack sentenced them to life imprisonment with 20-year recommendations.

The three appealed. The strongest ground for this first appeal was the evidence of two witnesses, given to the police during the original murder investigations, that they had seen Mathews driving the van on its getaway journey soon after the time at which he claimed it had picked him up as a passenger. Their statements were not made available to the defence until after the trial. Cooper, Murphy and McMahon argued that if the jury had known Mathews was lying on such an important point, it would not have accepted his evidence in respect of their own part in the crime.

The appeals were dismissed. The Criminal Division of the Court of Appeal (CA) stated that 'the vital matter' in which the jury believed Mathews and rejected the Appellants was that 'they were the three men with him making up this party'.

The next significant event in what was to become one of the most disputed murder cases in English legal history was the discovery of an alibi for Murphy. The Home Secretary referred this fresh evidence back to the CA and Murphy's conviction was quashed in November 1973. But the Court made a point of saying (doubtless in an effort to discourage the other two) that this breach in Mathews' credibility did not necessarily mean 'that Cooper and McMahon's convictions are in any way rendered unsafe'.

The Home Secretary thought otherwise. He sent the case back to the CA saying he had 'come to the conclusion that the quashing of Murphy's conviction raises an issue about the credibility of Mathews' evidence against McMahon and Cooper'.

In February 1975 the CA dismissed this new appeal – largely on the basis of the loophole it had inserted into the judgment which quashed Murphy's conviction (that accepting Murphy's alibi did not undermine Mathews' credibility in respect of Cooper and McMahon). It maintained that Mathews could have made a 'mistake' about Murphy and still have been correct about Cooper and McMahon.

No matter how hard the CA belted this case out of court, it always bounced back. In 1976 the Home Secretary ordered the CA to determine the 'whole of the cases' of Cooper and McMahon, and all but directed it to recall Drury and Mathews for cross-examination. By this time the Drury-Mathews connection had become much more suspect. Drury had been convicted and imprisoned for corruption with the pornographer James Humphries. (His appeal against this conviction was later allowed.) Humphries had made a statement to the effect that in 1972 Drury admitted to him that he had fitted up Murphy even though he knew he was innocent, because Murphy had been trying to help the other two who were in Drury's view definitely guilty. Drury also said (according to Humphries) that he'd had a 'drink' out of Mathews' reward money from the Post Office. Some independent corroboration of this payment came from a journalist, Bill Thomson, who stated that Mathews had admitted to him that he had split the reward (£2,000) with Drury. These grounds, together with some fresh alibi evidence, constituted the basis of the third reference

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of the Cooper-McMahon case to the Court of Appeal.

Drury's response to cross-examination yielded nothing, but Mathews was so unconvincing that even the three judges of the CA could not pretend to believe him. His account of what he did with the first £700 of his reward almost had them rolling in the aisles. But when the entertainment was over McMahon and Cooper went back to their cells to carry on with their life sentences. Dismissing their appeals in July 1976, the CA stated that Mathews was 'on the vital part of his story clearly telling the truth'.

There is a more illustrious source than my own to substantiate the view that this last judgment had less to do with the facts of the case than with the CA's commitment to the guilt of Cooper and McMahon. In a lecture delivered in May this year at All Souls College, Lord Devlin pointed out that the constitutional function of the Court of Appeal was to hear grounds of appeal with a view to quashing a conviction where the evidence made the verdict 'unsafe or unsatisfactory'. Yet in its handling of the Cooper-McMahon appeal in July 1976, said Devlin, the CA had stepped outside its constitutional role and usurped the function of the jury. It had done this by trying to decide not just whether witnesses were *capable* of being believed (as in previous cases), but whether they *ought* to be believed.

Lord Devlin also criticised the CA for failing in this case to ask or answer the 'vital question' of whether the fresh evidence raised a 'lurking doubt'. In his view it certainly did – and therefore it was the CA's responsibility to order a fresh trial or quash the convictions.

In December last year McMahon was referred back to the CA yet again. He had a fresh alibi witness who supported his evidence at the trial but this time the Home Secretary first sought the 'opinion' of the Court as to the admissibility of the evidence. Under this 'opinion' procedure, the three judges sat in private without McMahon or counsel being present. But rather than dealing with the *admissibility* of the evidence, the CA played jury again and proceeded to assess McMahon's evidence for *credibility*. Having looked at the witnesses' statements, it found them 'not likely to be credible'.

It was this 'opinion' and the Home Secretary's subsequent rejection of McMahon's appeal that drew me into the case. Up to then, I was only willing to let Mick bore me with his case as long as he gave me equal time boring him with my degree. Even then I reckoned I wasn't having a good trade, since 'case bores' are notoriously lethal. Nevertheless the CA's 'opinion' drew enough outrage from me to get me involved and here I am driving myself crazy trying to write about it. For while Devlin maintained that in usurping the role of the jury the CA was conducting an 'imperfect retrial', over the question of McMahon's alibi it had managed something more than that – an *unjust* retrial.

The fresh alibi evidence relied on two witnesses who would corrobate the account McMahon gave the jury of his movements on the day of the murder. What he said at the trial was that just after 2 pm he left Thames Magistrates where he had appeared on a theft charge, in company with his father, Cooper, and his bail surety Lawrence. They drove to his home in Murray Grove (London) where Lawrence left them talking by Cooper's red Mercedes. After the chat with Cooper, McMahon went indoors and stayed until about 5 pm, when he walked round to his girl friend's. The route took him across Kingsland Road at a time when he was at an inhibiting distance from the scene of the crime.

The crucial witness who saw McMahon in Kingsland Road at around 5 pm was a man called Hurn, although it was the other witness, Lawrence, who brought Hurn's sighting to light eight years after the event. For Lawrence, after leaving Cooper and McMahon chatting by the Mercedes, had met Hurn on the corner of Murray Grove. Hurn had taken a fancy to Cooper's car and discussed with Lawrence his wish to buy it. He then went off to catch a bus. At about 5 pm, while waiting at the bus stop, he saw McMahon crossing Kingsland Road and was going to ask him about the Mercedes when his bus arrived.

The reason why the evidence had not been available before was that Hurn and Lawrence did not meet again for eight years; it was not until then, when they recalled the last time they met, that the sighting of McMahon became known to someone who realised its significance. Up to then, Hurn had only known McMahon by his nickname – Mackie – and knew nothing of his involvement in the Luton murder.

This may not be a very good alibi but with just a semblance of impartiality, the CA could have conceded its admissibility and then allowed it to be assessed – and perhaps rejected – in open court. Instead, it adduced four reasons for rejecting it which, coming from such an eminent body, really are a disgrace.

First, the Court claimed in its 'opinion' that Lawrence had been at the original trial as a 'potential (though uncalled) alibi for McMahon' – implying that if Lawrence had had anything worthwhile or truthful to say, he'd have been called into Court to say it then. Even if Lawrence *had* been a witness for McMahon at the trial, calling him would not have revealed Hurn's sighting, since he didn't find out about it until eight years later. The point is, though, Lawrence was a witness – uncalled – for Cooper, not McMahon, as the trial records show.

Second, the CA pointed out a single inconsistency between Lawrence's statement to the defence solicitors at the time of the trial, and his statement to the Home Office detective in 1977: Lawrence told the first he had travelled to the Thames Magistrates court (on the day of the murder) in a mini cab, and the second that he had gone there in Cooper's car. Yet all this actually showed was that Lawrence's memory was fallible in peripheral details; it did not affect the crucial matter of Hurn's sighting.

Third, the CA said the fresh evidence did not 'justify an inference that the events referred to took place on the 10th September 1969'. There is no basis for this point, since the facts only allow a choice between whether the events occurred on that date or whether Lawrence and Hurn fabricated them. For as the court record shows, McMahon made three appearances before the Thames Magistrates, but only one was in the afternoon – and that was on 10 September 1969. Advancing this point as a reason for rejecting the fresh evidence was the most glaring error in the 'opinion' delivered by the CA.

Fourth, the 'opinion' stated that 'despite intense efforts to find alibi evidence to support McMahon, the evidence was not previously forthcoming'. But both Lawrence and Hurn gave feasible explanations as to why their evidence took eight years to surface. In December 1969 Lawrence was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and at about that time Hurn moved to Harlow and began driving lorries to the continent. It is not difficult to see how they might have lost touch with each other.

What kind of justice, then, has the Court of Appeal rendered McMahon? He was convicted by a jury for a murder on evidence that has now in almost every respect been discredited. Despite seeing the mainstay of the evidence against him – Mathews – destroyed, he also had to watch the CA reaffirm his conviction by unconstitutionally usurping the role of the jury. He has seen the CA ignore the part played by Drury and finally he has watched it overreach its terms of reference to dismiss his fresh alibi evidence with some Alice-in-Wonderland reasoning.

I got a letter from Mick while I was writing this article. In it he says: 'You will know by now that the Home Secretary has decided to give me another knockback. I am going to have to start again. I won't give up but I see no hope while Rees remains in office.' In his lecture, Devlin noted that the CA, by moving beyond its constitutional function, 'places a greater burden on the prerogative'. In shirking its responsibility to apply the 'lurking doubt' principle, the CA effectively places that duty on the government. The ball is in your court, Mr Home Secretary. Try to play it by the rules.

This Vatican

☐ Bishop Giuseppe Caprio, the Vatican's Assistant Secretary of State: 'An electrocardiograph made by the doctors, unfortunately confirmed that the Holy Father had left this earth to enter paradise'. – *Guardian* (A. Greenberg)

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Peter Laurie: After twenty years the nuclear doughnut hots up

If you happen to be passing through Innsbruck next week, you may find yourself in company with a jolly crew of fusion physicists, assembled by the International Atomic Energy Authority for the seventh biennial conference and money festival on their esoteric speciality. It is likely that the atmosphere, if not at dancing in the street level, will be tolerably festive, for, after twenty years of hard graft the fusion community are getting within sight of the great prize. And that is, as the publicity for the ill-fated *Zeta* gushed twenty years ago, 'unlimited power from hydrogen of the oceans'. The toast this year – but make sure you're drinking with a Princeton man – will be 'Sixty million degrees!' for that is the record temperature they've reached in their PLT apparatus (Princeton Large Torus), and the reason they will be glad to consume spirituous liquors while wishing you long life and a thousand suns is that anything within reach of 100 million is reckoned to be good enough for power generation. If you happen to be with scientists of another race, and particularly Englishmen from Culham, where PLT's rival DITE lives, the thing to say is 'Ten to the power of fourteen? Ha!' with a cynical shrug of the shoulders. The reason for that is that you don't get useful fusion in this kind of machine, whatever the temperature – unless you can hold 10^{14} atomic nuclei per cubic centimetre together for about a second. And this the Princetonians have not yet done.

Having now primed you for bar-room chat, we can now explain what on earth it's all about. The principle of fusion power is simple. If you take two light atoms and bang them together sufficiently briskly, they fuse together into a heavier one. You would think that the new one would be twice the weight of the old, but it turns out not: it is slightly lighter. The lost weight appears as energy according to the mystic rubric $E = mc^2$. It is reckoned that with the kind of efficiency you might get in a practical reactor, a gramme of hydrogen fuel should yield the energy equivalent of a barrel of oil. And if that can be kept up, the oceans of the world should supply today's energy needs for something like a quarter of a million years.

The problem is to make a whole lot of tiny, civilised H bomb explosions. There are a couple of dozen possible reactions, but the easiest to get to go is between deuterium and tritium (deuterium is hydrogen with an extra neutron, making two nucleons – basic particles at the centre of the nucleus. Tritium has one more yet). At first it seemed simple. You take a whiff of these two gases, heat them up in a box, and wait for the energy to come bubbling out. But there are problems. The first is that at 100 million degrees C, any material container will both cool and contaminate the fuel. One solution is to hold it in a magnetic field. There are several possible shapes, but the favourite to date, is a torus (a doughnut) because there are no ends for the fuel to leak out of. You heat it by running a current through it, and this has the happy effect of making a magnetic field that pulls the plasma away from the walls.

Well, that is the point fusion researchers reached twenty years ago, and to the cynical eye they haven't got a lot further since. They are still putting hydrogen into doughnuts, still pouring Niagaras of electricity through the coils round them – at our expense – and still not getting any power.

The trouble with the brilliantly simple doughnut scheme is that the plasma, which should contract into a nice hot mini-doughnut, actually lashes about in a frenzied manner, rubs against the walls and instantly cools down. Magnetic confinement had a bad ten years of secret suffering (it was all classified after the war) until the Russians broke the subject open for public debate in the mid fifties and in '68 announced a way of taming the wriggles.

They call their solution Tokomak (and that will be an acceptable translingual toast for most of the people in Innsbruck) and the way they keep their plasma quiet is to stretch it with a second magnetic field which runs alongside it, round the ring of the doughnut. A more significant triumph from Princeton is that in the PLT this system now works well enough to keep the plasma still for long enough, even though their plasma densities are not yet high enough.

So the road to a useful fusion power plant has proved longer and far more tedious than anyone dreamed in 1950. At every turn difficulties sprang up. You couldn't get the plasma dense enough, or hot enough. When you did, instabilities sprang up, both large and small scale. Computers are only now getting powerful enough to simulate turbulance in fluids, but there isn't the mathematics to cope. When you get the plasma hot enough, it starts knocking chunks off the wall and dirtying itself, and you have to go to enormous lengths to siphon off the contaminated gas. Electrical heating of the plasma stops working at about 1 million degrees so you have to use radio heating – like a microwave oven – or the injection of seething hot fuel through the enormously strong magnetic fields. The stretching coils have to carry so much current that they will have to be superconducting – no-one has built such big superconductors and they may be too expensive. The next generation of Tokomaks, exemplified here by the Joint European Torus, to be built at Culham, will probably cost something like £500 million each (the JET budget is 120 million 1977 pounds), weigh a couple of thousand tons and fill a fifty foot cube. The simple doughnut shape will have disappeared under an accretion of auxiliary gizmos. With luck, they will produce as much power as is put in – and in JET's case, that will be a good slice of the output of the CEGB's vast Didcot power station.

And all this just to demonstrate burn, let alone produce useful power. The next drawback to hydrogen fusion is that dividends are paid in fast neutrons. Now a neutron clouting along at high speed is a fine chap for killing soldiers in tanks, but is a little unruly in a more domesticated setting. He has to be trapped in a blanket of lithium, which he makes good and hot, and this blanket has to be tucked neatly in and around and in between and over and under all the gizmos (You will remember, of course, that the superconducting coils must be kept a thousand degrees cooler than the blanket a couple of inches away?) The blanket is cooled with helium, a gas so subtle that it seeps through all but the tightest joints, and is turned slowly into tritium – needed for fuel – by the neutron bombardment.

Once a Tokomak reactor gets going, its inside will all get radioactive, and if it goes wrong – as it no doubt will, sooner or later – it will have to be taken apart by remote control in 120 ton pie slices. It is not just your correspondent whose mind is boggled by the horrendous complexities of it all. There are many fine minds in the fusion community – mostly, it is fair to say, among the 25 per cent of it that does not share in Tokomak funding – who think that these doughnuts will never fly. However, the IAEA's position is that, so long as matters go ahead as well as it seems they might, net power generation should be demonstrated in 15 years and a commercial power station in twenty-five.

Fortunately there are at least a dozen other ways of tackling the problem. The next most popular stems from the military's obsession with high power lasers: you use hammer blows of light to smack tiny deuterium-tritium pellets into fusion. At Livermore outside Los Angeles, the Americans have a nightmare machine called SHIVA, with an Albert-Hall-full of lasers. To be frank, it looks no more likely than Tokomak. There is a slew of different shaped bottles and pipes and spheres, some exploding and some ominously quiet, each with its enthusiasts and detractors – all of whom you may meet at Innsbruck. But be warned of the Cinderella effect – the more far fetched a method the better it looks because less has been spent on it and its inevitably snags lie decently hidden in unfunded obscurity.

It is odd that no one seriously considers the obvious way of doing the trick, which could be put into execution tomorrow. You could give up worrying about a lot of small explosions and have one or two big ones. Just drill a deep hole in some remote and preferably scenic part of the country like Balmoral, drop a small H bomb down it – which is an article in plentiful supply – and then pump water down afterwards. The heat of the explosion will be trapped in the deep rocks, the water turns to steam, you catch it and put it through a turbine – *voila*! I quite like to think of all those deer and grouse and the gentry trying to slaughter them, holding on for grim death as the landscape surges round them so that Edgbaston shall have the juice to watch *Coronation Street*.

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New York Diary

☐ It was Carter who popularised the notion that starting early was the best way of getting into the White House. He began running in 1974 and was elected in 1976. The idea caught on. Sometimes, reading the newspapers this summer and their reports of the Carter *débâcle*, one gets the impression that modern American presidents have only a two-year term and the citizenry will be back in the voting booths next November. Perhaps, given the obduracy of the country's long-term problems, elections – held as frequently as possible – are the only means of giving at least the illusion of change.

This far into 1978 we already have one declared Republican candidate, an unwholesome right-winger called representative Phil Crane. We have preparatory noises from Ronald Reagan and Jerry Ford and action in the paddock from such rapidly paling dark horses as Jack Kemp, another Conservative from Buffalo who has been winning some friends with his call for a 25 per cent cut in Federal Tax Rates.

No open declarations from Democratic challengers to the President, apart from Governor Jerry Brown's visible resolve to dwell on Pennsylvania Avenue. But the press is already calling the early primaries in 1980. Pat Moynihan is espoused as the inheritor of Scoop Jackson's cold war/pro Israel mantle. There's even nostalgic chat about George McGovern. And of course there's Teddy, declared by no less than 80 per cent of Democratic voters in one recent poll to be their most favoured nominee. So much for Mary Jo Kopechne. Teddy bustles about the country making speeches in all the right places. Though he's beginning to thicken facially into the flushed, meaty lineaments of an old Boston pol like Tip O'Neill he still looks good. Will he or won't he? He won't say, of course, and so he lives in the shadow of a scenario: Brown to challenge Carter in the early primaries and Teddy – who needs to run as little as possible in public, the better to stay alive – will clean up at the convention.

☐ Carter has been wooing the press, having legion of the fourth estate up to the White House for massage. This usually pays off and there are signs that trusted techniques of blandishment are working again. Bill Broyles, a friend of mine who edits the *Texas Monthly*, was recently given five hours in the White House along with 30 other magazine editors and potentates. Carter himself turned up for half an hour during lunch and answered questions. Bill tells me that the best question came from a representative of *Glamour* magazine. Mr President, she asked, if your first two years in the White House had been on tape, which eighteen and a half minutes would you erase? After displeased silence and a wan smile, Carter declined to reply. There's an NS competition for you.

☐ Among the more astounding events of the month has been the spectacle of a President vetoing a $37 billion weapons authorisation Bill, because Congress – against the stated wishes of the White House and the Secretary of Defence – shoved in $2.13 billion for a new nuclear powered aircraft carrier. It's been estimated that the cost of this carrier, given the need for accompanying planes and flotilla, will tot up to $100 billion over ten years. One defence consultant has stated that 'no more costly system of keeping a limited number of airplanes at a forward base (in the eastern Mediterranean) has ever been devised by the mind of man.' But the military industrial complex has got the bit thoroughly between its teeth. These are boom years and each of the three services, backed by their corporate suppliers, want increasingly large slices of a defence budget which is now running at $126 billion and which will be up to $185 billion by 1984. The Russian threat is naturally being put to overtime use to accommodate these vast expenditures, but sometimes even the more bellicose statements of the invaluable Admiral Grechko do not suffice and simple lunacy comes to the fore. A propos the F-16 plane the Secretary of the Air Force recently remarked: 'Price is no object in the pursuit of the low-cost fighter'. This is on a par with Prime Minister Begin's pursuit of 'permanent, partial peace'. Carter has already vetoed the aircraft carrier and, if he keeps his head, will probably veto Begin's concept at Camp David at the beginning of September, too. Both actions will not do him much damage with the voters.

☐ New Yorkers have been somewhat stinted of news of the 1980 elections and indeed the President's veto because the three major newspapers in town have been closed down for over a week. The strike has had some of the usual welcome effects: silence from politicians, who prefer a printed record of their bold deeds and pronouncements, possible diminution of villainy by criminals who like their clipping from the *Daily News* as much as the next man.

The reason for the strike is generally agreed upon. The proprietors of the *New York Times, Daily News* and *New York Post* have long been desirous of reducing manning in the press rooms. Finally after protracted negotiation they posted new rules which involved large and summary reductions in this sector of their work forces. The pressmen struck and the other unions walked out in support. August, given low advertising, is not a bad month for newspaper publishers to take a strike. With the *rentrée* at the beginning of September the boot will be on the other foot. The *New York Times*, which posted profits of $10.7 million in the first half of 1978, is in good shape. The *News*, though the largest selling paper in the country, has been making very little money for its proprietor, the *Chicago Tribune* Company. Rupert Murdoch's *Post* has been losing up to $10 million a year. All three want to break, or at least bend the pressmen in the way Katharine Graham did at the *Washington Post* in 1975. The longest newspaper strike in New York came in 1963, and lasted 117 days when three papers went out of business and such organs as the *New York Review of Books* came into existence. It's possible this strike will be a long one too, but the carefree early days when news addicts read the *Philadelphia Bulletin, The Wall Street Journal, Anna Karenina* or simply the words on the lavatory walls are already gone. At the start of this week no less than three *pro tem* dailies put out by striking journalists and advertising salesmen were on the stands. They are all fairly dreadful, with wire service copy and sports results holding the advertisements apart.

More of interest than their contents are their backers. There was much excitement at the start of the week when it transpired that Murdoch had purchased in advance 150,000 copies a day of the New York *Metro*, and thus looked very much as though he were partially sponsoring a striker's paper. Rupert said forthrightly that he merely wanted to provide his home delivery routes in strategic Queens with something to read so that they would not defect to the suburban *Newsday*. But there were darker mutterings –. I assume inaccurate – that he would eventually fold the union-burdened *Post* and carry on with the *Metro* instead.

The situation is rendered more complex by the fact that the *New York Times* is doing much the same thing with the *City News* and indeed by the fact that the *Metro* is the most up-market of the three and published by an employee of the *New York Times*. Murdoch can at least take comfort in the fact that he owns the *Village Voice* and *New York Magazine*, which are running enormous issues stuffed with advertising from frantic retailers, cinemas and classified takers. Also profiting handsomely is the *News-World*, a daily paper put out by devotees of the Rev Sung Myung Moon. In the first days of the strike their racing tipsters called 4 out of 10 races at Saratoga twice in succession, which shows CIA mysticism does not entirely cloud judgment.

Alexander Cockburn

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

☐ I was middle-aged before I settled down after a stream of lovers, illegitimate children, Left wing politics, prison and goodness knows what else. – *Guardian* (Mr K. Wyke)

☐ Lord Cranborne says his interest in politics has been all-absorbing for the last few years but this interest doesn't necessarily spring from his family background. His father wanted him to join the army but his parents didn't push him towards politics. Oxford was followed by a career in banking in California and this country. 'I wanted some sort of career. One can't rely on a private income for ever.' – *Guardian* (D. M. Bean)

☐ 'I am very much against opposition parties having detailed policies for everything,' said Conservative trade spokesman Mr John Nott, in a speech on July 12. – *Guardian* (Norah Davis)

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First Person

Arthur Marshall

See How They Run

How very beneficial it would be if all the games and sports on which human beings spend so much of their time, energy and money could serve some wider and more useful purpose than mere bodily relaxation, if such is what they provide. Do good draughts players make even better and kinder husbands? There is no evidence to support this. Proficiency at ping-pong can hardly be said to give one much of a helping hand down Life's winding B roads. It was always claimed that skill at rugby football aided the exponent to 'build character', though what sort of character was never specified and those furious and sweaty faces made one sometimes rather worry about what was actually being built. But off the footer field and de-mudded for everyday life, good rugger performers always seemed very much like anybody else: and in some cases, even more so. I suspect that cricket did at least instil in its players two fairly valuable mini-virtues. They were a reluctant patience (three hours' tedious unemployment in the outfield, and then torrents of rain just as one's moment of glory had arrived and one was going in to stone-wall at No. 11) and an acceptance of the inevitable (endless humiliations and, from time to time, red and leathery balls whizzing their way most painfully to make agonising contact with their lesser fellows in one's crutch).

From these sad reflections I instantly except athletics. Stirring events in the Commonwealth Games at Edmonton have convinced me yet again what superb advantages athletic ability furnishes for ordinary life, especially for those on the distaff side. Splendid Sonia Lannaman who flies down the track at about 20 m.p.h. (this may not *sound* fast but just try it and see), could speedily catch up and nab any fleeing and cowardly male who had been reckless enough to pinch her personal things. I never see a lady hurdler without thrilling to the thought of what a fine showing she would make at a Harrods sale, bursting through the doors from her starting-blocks on the tick of 9 a.m. and leaping counter after counter on her way to that distant and generously marked-down liberty bodice. And then that delightful shot-putter, the charming J. Oakes, finding herself tussling with a male bagsnatcher in Bond Street, has merely to haul off and hurl her heavy accessory to safety through an open third floor window, prior to employing her impressive musculature in a more punitive role. Though, in gymnastics, the advantage of being able to turn briskly head-over-heels in a lime green leotard on a wooden plank four inches wide is not immediately apparent, there will come a time later on, and mark my words, when a lady may need to do just that. 'God is working His purpose out', as the tuneful hymn reminds us.

I have mentioned an unacceptable malpractice currently available on our city streets and to this I must now add another inconvenience, namely the increasing risk to pedestrians of being run over, not in the nice, healthy and customary way in the road and by a car, but on the pavement, sent flying by a lumbering businessman jogging his way out of, as he hopes, a thrombosis. At least, they all look like businessmen and one is not safe from them at any hour of the day or night (dusk brings them out by the dozen, and indeed a dim light is rather kinder to them). Up and down they puff (they do give, like wasps, some sort of warning of their approach), worn by worry, creased with care and wobbly from what we now seem to have to refer to as 'working lunches'. Incidentally, I've often rather wondered about these lunches. Supposing that one cabinet minister says, over the *roulades de saumon fumé*, to another cabinet minister, intent on his cock-a-leekie and already salivating for the *gigot d'agneau*, 'how were things this morning?' and receives the answer 'bloody awful', followed by moody silences right through to the *crêpes suzettes à la suédoise*, does this rank as a 'working lunch' and can it therefore be notched up as an expense? One longs to know about all these little matters, but mum's the word on all subjects of real importance to the public. Oh for a cabinet 'Crawfie' who would spill the beans and take us, on waves of rich prose, to the very heart of things.

However, just in case there is something positive to be gained for those of us to whom slenderness has long since said a long goodbye, I am contemplating starting a Jogging Group in our Devon village of Appleton and treating the hilly terrain as a challenge. To this end I have armed myself and at a cost of 75p with an excellent Arrow Books paperback called *Natural Fitness*. Our author is the very gifted and quite splendidly fit Bruce Tulloh who, as you'll probably remember, once ran right across the USA (partly without shoes, wasn't it?), burning up 6,000 calories a day, he tells us, which, as far as I can judge from the calorie chart provided, equals about five jumbo pork chops with all the trimmings, followed by two plentiful platefuls of syrup-soused roly-poly. It is therefore in no way surprising that, for keeping in lissome trim, it is running that this fine athlete recommends for almost all of us and he gives us targets to aim at (a 95-year-old Greek completed twenty-six miles in under seven hours). And by the way, if mocked while jogging, 'a dignified silence is the best defence'.

The book contains every kind of safety precaution for fatties, together with suitable running distances and times and how to set about things in general and it will be a real eye-opener to Canon Mountjoy, always so ready to 'join in'. However, obese and complacent as I am, it would never do for me to expose myself, so to speak, in person to Mr Tulloh. Although he is kindness and understanding itself, he does rap us all pretty severely over the knuckles and, after saying that very few people die of plain 'old age', tells us, with words that in print come out visually as a disapproving look, that 'of twenty-five million men and women in this country over the age of forty, I would venture to say that not more than one-tenth are really healthy'. Oh dear. We are compared, and very greatly to our disadvantage, to the Amazonian Indians and the Kalahari bushmen (not a whiff of hypertension or blood pressure among the lot of them). Well, my Cousin Madge, though admittedly not a bushwoman, Kalahari or otherwise, is 87 and still gardens vigorously, which can't be *all* bad.

Somewhat dazed by these strictures and looking for a straw to clutch at, there came a moment when I suddenly thought myself to be on firmer and more recognisable ground and this was when Mr Tulloh introduced into his narrative the words 'fartlek', 'burpees' and 'curls'. But I'd got them wrong. It seems that a fartlek is 'a short burst at a faster pace' after running two or three miles. Burpees figure in the Flexibility Exercises and require the legs to shoot backwards and forwards while in 'the push-up position' and 'curls', which I hoped would be a reference to the I'm-for-ever-blowing Bubbles soap advertisement, is a muscle-freshener involving bricks and well beyond my powers.

A final problem. How on earth am I to indicate to Canon Mountjoy, all kitted out for the hills in roomy T-shirt and lightweight shorts and just rarin' to go, that nestling beneath the clobber, a gossamer jockstrap is aesthetically desirable?

Roger Woddis

Auguries of Lunacy

To see a future paradise
And how your progeny will fare,
You only need to close your eyes
And breathe in Aldermaston air.

A scandal spread across the page
Puts Fred Mulley in a rage;
A breeze in Berkshire may become
A lungful of plutonium;
A dog found dying at the gate
Predicts a radioactive State;
A skylark wounded on the wing
Makes experts laugh like anything;
He who mutates the little wren
Shall be a model citizen;
A loon shall build, all reason spent,
A nuclear establishment;
He who plans national suicide
Cannot in law be certified;
The strongest poison ever known
Is good for cancer of the bone;
A harlot scientist on heat
Shall weave old England's winding-sheet.

Father, forgive them – *entre nous*,
They know not what the hell they do.

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Letters to the Editor

Propping up the Bar

Sir, The article concerning the case of Mrs Stella Burnett and the leader 'Propping up the Bar' (NS 11 August) attack the legal profession in general and the Bar in particular with a vitriol that makes Michael Zander seem an old-fashioned conservative.

Let me deal first with Mrs Burnett's case. The headlines concern a claim that without good connections and great persistence, she would have been 'cheated' by the legal profession. I have scoured the article for anything that reflects the least ill on the legal profession. I can find nothing. Mr Page criticises the low level of income necessary to qualify for legal aid. That is no fault of the profession. He criticises the defiant attitude of the Medical Defence Union, the doctor's insurance company. That is no fault of the legal profession. He criticises one barrister for failing to tell Mrs Burnett she has a good claim. If that barrister thinks she has not got a good claim he must tell her so. The only criticism of him can be that he was wrong. What reform of the legal profession can help that? Mrs Burnett finally goes to another barrister who helps her achieve her aim. She receives a very good settlement. Where is the 'cheating'?

However, the real attack comes with the leader. There the allegations fly like shot sprayed from the wide barrels of a sawn-off shotgun. Let me reply briefly. The Bar does not, so far as I am aware, restrict recruits (what sort of restriction do you mean anyway, formal or effective?). Anyone is free to join the Bar on passing its exams. Clients have a complete choice as to who represents them subject to availability. A barrister cannot change a brief with another barrister without the client's consent. As for preparing briefs a few minutes before a case comes on, this may happen on occasions where the case is of a very minor nature but to imply that this is a regular occurrence with cases of weight is dishonest.

What a pity then that this acidity so discolours discussion of the one real issue raised by the leader, the question of fusion between the Bar and the solicitors. In reality there is little duplication between a barrister and solicitor in litigation because preparing a case (collecting evidence etc.) and arguing it in court are two distinct functions. If one lawyer did both, he would be able to do fewer cases which would simply mean it would be necessary to engage another lawyer to handle the overload. Far better to have a specialist preparer and a specialist advocate. Another important point the leader missed is that one of the great advantages of separation is that it gives any solicitor, no matter how small his firm, access to the very best of the Bar.

ANTHONY BLAIR

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Arms for China

Sir, Robin Cook (NS 18 August) cannot decide whether I have deserted my Conservative principles in favour of conversion late in life to Communism, Chinese-style, or the Chinese have deserted their true faith in favour of a practical attitude in regard to the strengthening of their defence capability undeterred by political inhibitions about the arms supplier. Of course neither evaluation is correct. My own apprehensions about the USSR do not arise from Communism as such but from the fact that the Kremlin has built up military power to a level well beyond any conceivable defence requirement.

China has not surrendered one iota of its chosen economic and political way of life. That is a domestic matter and any external influences exerted to change it would be resented and counter-productive. Indeed it is precisely because the new Peking rulers are determined to resist Russian pressures, of which they have so many bitter memories, that they are anxious to acquire industrial, technological and military equipment from the West to safeguard their national integrity. However hard it may be for Mr Cook and his ilk to appreciate a realistic outlook I find it quite easy to proffer support, as an unrepentant Conservative, to Communist China, because the latter poses no threat at all to my country's security: just as in the last war, although already then wholly hostile to the Marxist creed, I understood the need to co-operate with Communist Russia against the then common enemy.

Incidentally, philosophical reflections apart, Mr Cook has got his history wrong in seeking to compare China's actions in regard to Tibet with the USSR's invasion of Hungary. Tibet *was* part of the old Chinese empire from 1720 onwards and was generally accepted as such. Hungary in its long history has never been part of Russia's domains.

SIR FREDERIC BENNETT

House of Commons
London SW1

Sir, The Conservative campaign to forge an alliance with the Chinese communist dictatorship is as strategically myopic as it is morally despicable. Robin Cook should not, however, assume that it results primarily from a Cold War predisposition to frustrate a Soviet Russian 'conspiracy to achieve global domination,' though that is its principal selling point.

There is also the economic lure of a huge population, with low wage rates and ruthless labour discipline, to the capitalist interests who prefer to sweat the east rather than develop the west. 'China is now quite clearly prepared to seek international capital to finance its plans for agricultural, industrial and military modernisation,' writes Lord Chalfont (*The Times* 3 July). It is Japan all over again, with similar eventual results for western trade competition and industrial standards.

H. PIENAAR

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Bad language

Sir, The article on Wales and the aims of the Welsh Language Society by Duncan Campbell (NS 11 August) is a good example of muddled reporting, inaccuracy and misrepresentation. It is just not true, for example, that the only time broadcasting equipment was destroyed was last February at Blaenplwyf near Aberystwyth. There have been a number of such cases in England as well as Wales. He implies the recent existence of 'Welsh Not', but this practice died out during the last century.

It is stated that the Welsh Nationalist Party (Plaid Cymru) 'has won surprising local success in the South Wales valleys', but the reality of the present situation is that over the last year the Nationalists have lost one District and County Council seat after another in every by-election held. Mr Campbell is tendentious in stating early on in his article that there was a recent 'unsuccessful prosecution of two members of the society's senate for conspiring to damage TV installations'. It is only over the page that he says that the jury failed to agree and that there will be a retrial.

There is a massive rejection by Welsh people of the policies of the Welsh Language Society and the Welsh Nationalist Party. If Mr Campbell had really investigated the feeling in Wales, he would soon have realised that people are fed up with TV masts being tampered with and road signs being destroyed. There is also much apprehension over the increasing amount of job reservation for Welsh speakers and the consequent division of the people into first and second class citizens. An advertisement for a uniformed attendant at the National Library at Aberystwyth stated that Welsh was essential for the post. Less than half of the town's population speak Welsh, and so the majority is barred from application because of the prejudices of the language loyalists. The 'Dyfed Better Education Campaign' (another language loyalist group) has stated that it is building the elite of the nation, and indeed much of the thinking behind the establishment of separate bilingual schools and job reservation is elitist.

Mr Campbell believes that the Welsh Language Society is campaign for socialism. It may be campaigning for national socialism, but this has nothing to do with real socialism. He also says that Plaid Cymru has a manifesto 'at least as left-wing as the Labour Party'. I fail to follow this because I do not see how a party that puts questions of ethnicity and race above all others can possibly be said to be left-wing or socialist.

JOHN MAREK

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Papal socialism

Sir, For those of us who believe not only that it is perfectly possible to be a Catholic and a Marxist but that the two creeds are complementary, the less than mellow *pronunciamentos* by Christopher Hitchens on the late Pope Paul in particular and the Catholic Church in general (NS 11 August) cannot be allowed to pass without comment.

While President Tito in an exceptionally warm tribute declared that all mankind had suffered an irreparable loss in the death of the Pope, whom he called a convinced champion of peace and understanding, Mr Hitchens simply dismisses him as obscurantist. While President Brezhnev declared that in his efforts for peace and detente the late Pope will be remembered by all people of goodwill, and Enrico Berlinguer has praised him as a man of high humanity and culture, Mr Hitchens writes him off as dismally reactionary.

When Mr Hitchens refers to the late Pontiff as a natural and instinctive conservative one presumes that he must be unaware of the social encyclical *Populorum Progressio* in which capitalism is roundly condemned: '. . . a system has been constructed which considers profit as the key motive for economic progress, competition as the supreme law of economics, and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right that has no limits and carries no corresponding social obligation. This unchecked liberalism leads to dictatorship rightly denounced by Pius 11th as producing the international imperialism of money. One cannot condemn such abuses too strongly by solemnly recalling once again that the economy is at the service of man.'

No one could pretend that there were not aspects of Paul's reign which were controversial but his social and political teachings were far from reactionary and will possibly be acknowledged long after the dilettante posturings of trendy radicals, bourgeois liberals and other ideological bed-wetters have been forgotten.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

G. R. Elton

Visions and Revisions

The English Civil War by ROBERT ASHTON
Weidenfeld £10 and £4.95

Frozen landscapes are notoriously beautiful; they have a satisfyingly enduring shape in which all details find their place and are readily fitted into the whole. When the thaw comes and they break up, the first effect is to bewilder, disturb and consequently annoy the observer who finds that he has lost his familiar bearings. This is what the last 15 years have been doing to the history of the English Civil Wars. All over that familiar territory, cracks have been appearing, leaving in the end a crazy pavement, some of it very crazy indeed. Occasionally the frost returned to close up this crack or that, and some travellers have managed to continue to use their old maps by boldly leaping across crevasses in which onlookers confidently expected to see them vanish with a diminishing howl. But such feats have been becoming increasingly difficult as old certainties about the role of religion, the struggle for liberty, the parties of Presbyterians and Independents, the importance of the Levellers and the meaning of popular movements have been retreating before the multiple assaults of theses and articles. And yet, so far, no new survey of the territory has seemed feasible because none of its features had managed to settle. Every revision seemed doomed to produce either a further revision or a partially successful counter-attack. The specialists in parliamentary diaries or pamphleteering would make little of what they were told about the peculiarities of local regions, while the devotees of localism inclined to look at events at the centre as unwelcome and largely irrelevant intrusions from outside. Lacking the certainties of their predecessors who were guided by whig, marxist or sub-marxist instructions, the new historians have had great difficulty in bringing the whole scene into focus.

Robert Ashton's endeavour, freed from the dominance of those guides, is thus both courageous and very timely. He has read everything – all those endless treatises on the various counties, all those articles on groupings in the House of Commons, all those collections of essays which have provided disturbing news on Arminians and Levellers and political manoeuvring. What is more, he has done a great deal of work in the sources, both printed and manuscript: this book is not only a synthesis of other people's findings (in itself a labour of much sweat and more usefulness) but also an original contribution to this exceptionally difficult bit of history. His footnotes are a remarkable guide to the literature, though one could wish that he had been allowed to extract them into a more easily assimilated bibliographical list. And though, in the nature of things, this must be in part an interim report, it is so good a one that it will make possible rapid progress in the production of enlarged understanding which can now develop both from his highly suggestive analysis and from tackling the questions which he offers but cannot yet solve. Because he so honestly shows what we have learnt and where we need to think and learn further, Ashton on the Civil War will make an excellent starting point for the next generation of scholars.

The achievement is the more admirable because Professor Ashton resolutely avoids the temptations of some enveloping theory, that selective method which less cautious, and less learned, historians employ when the facts overwhelm them. Here we find no puritan revolution, no bourgeois overthrow of a feudal structure, no declining aristocracy or rising gentry, even though Professor Ashton, a generous man, is quick to note the particles of truth that are found lurking within the girders of those towering and insubstantial structures. As he sees it, the drift to war and the manner in which people lined up thereafter, fought for policies or survival, changed sides, endeavoured to seek peace by compromise or total victory – all these things can be understood only if the attitudes and behaviour of individuals, realised in their social, political and personal contexts, are given full play in a complex but well-controlled narrative of political events. For the first time, the 'parties of the Long Parliament' – peace, war, middle group – become really comprehensible and really explain what happened, just because the concept is used with flexible caution. There is a solidity of detail here which stems from thorough acquaintance, and perhaps Professor Ashton's outstanding achievement lies in producing this densely peopled survey without ever overwhelming the reader. Occasionally, obscurity results from his exceptional courtesy: even when he knows that an interpretation or an approach is essentially misconceived his gentleness lets the purveyor of error survive in a mildly confusing fashion. Here and there, the reader needs to do his own clearing of the undergrowth, but faint dotted lines are drawn to show where the axe should land. While this disturbed territory does not settle into a new frozen state – far from it – we now have a map which does not pretend that the many new features do not exist.

Professor Ashton, of course, would be the first to agree that he has not treated of everything or solved all the problems. Two particular questions may be raised here, even in a brief review, because they are very large. The first arises from the synthesising point of view which has been adopted, in avowed but not uncritical allegiance to that excellent master, the Earl of Clarendon. Despite the sections on localism, club men and the Scots (very well brought in here, in the wake of the pioneering work done south and north of the Tweed), despite the very perceptive treatment of the unhappy but intolerable king, the war is essentially studied from the vantage point of Westminster. This provides a clear and full sight of its politics: but this was, after all, a war, a time of fighting and killing. True, unlike the politics the fighting did not go on all the time; yet in this story of ambitions, disputes and negotiations one does rather miss the visible signs of the war which only occasionally intrude to disturb the machinations of politicians. One understands why Professor Ashton should not have wanted to make this a book on battles and sieges, but one would have liked to see rather more said about what seven years of recruiting and training, of shooting and stabbing, of armies marching and quartered, meant to the country and its people.

This (possible) deficiency in the treatment was deliberate; the other question raises doubts about a part of the enterprise expressly undertaken. Professor Ashton rightly insists that the years 1640-41 formed no historical divide, and that to write about the Civil War without writing about its prehistory would be absurd. He devotes about a third of the book to an analysis of the years 1603-42, under the heading (which begs some questions) of 'Court and Country'. Here the various potential causes of disruption are reviewed in a series of juxtapositions – social, political, religious – and we are invited to watch the kingdom prepare itself for the tearing apart of 1642. Though necessary and praiseworthy, this section is not altogether successful. Some important points are skipped over. Thus one misses a fuller treatment of the role of trading companies and their upper-class investors whose dissatisfactions played so manifest a part in the history of disputes from Bate's Case to the use of City politics in 1641: but Professor Ashton promises a real study of this in another work already in the press. Similarly, a searching investigation of the crucial Parliaments of the 1620s is postponed in expectation of Conrad Russell's forthcoming book on this theme. This is all very well – in the present state of early Stuart studies some things could not be waited for – but where does the rather cursory treatment of such large topics leave our understanding of the prehistory of the Civil War? In the main, it has

Peter Porter

Capulets and Montagus

Here the stones, like giant loaves,
Front a dusty piazza, a statue
In the foreground, plagued by pigeons,
Iron rings at ground level
And bow-fronted grilles rising
Three stories to a classic lintel –
There was no more living green here
When this place was a fortress than
There is today when they advertise
Sports cars outside its door.

There, at right angles, across the square,
Stands the building's rival. Slenderer stones
And higher windows suggest a slight
Lifting of the gloom of faction. One
Window bears a flowerless geranium.
Legendary lovers of two quarrelling
Families meet in weekly conference:
The buildings are both banks: passion,
Forsaking the poison phial and sepulchre,
Has found the fatty part of rivalry.

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to be said, still in that old country of long-term disturbances – religious and constitutional differences, strains between the Court and the gentlemen of the shires, those 'preconditions' rendered active by such 'precipitants' as Buckingham's wars or Laud's ecclesiastical policies, which were the mainstay of an exploded historiography.

Professor Ashton manages to avoid a great many traps: his innate caution, his wide range of sympathies, and his unwillingness to impose straitjackets on his evidence prevent the worst dangers of what remains a tacitly teleological approach. In one of the few bad sentences in a long book, he expresses his belief 'that one needs to go back beyond 1625 to understand the factors which gave rise to the great upheaval'. (This is not intended to suggest that the Civil Wars were provoked by the managers of Scottish landed estates.) No doubt one does, but the resort to analysis by topics, which hides the effects of change and time, once again leaves that prehistory tied to its aftermath in ways that distort the reality of the situation. Professor Ashton offers the least misleading summary of what I believe to be a very doubtful shaping of the truth; he so often removes error that one simply regrets the preservation of a needlessly error-inducing framework.

These questions can be further argued; what should remain in no doubt is the sheer quality of a work which tackles enormous problems without easy surrender to false concepts or arrogant claims to a new revelation, and which, despite the grinding of the cracked ice to which Professor Ashton listens with so much good-mannered patience, leaves those problems well on the way to a real, and possibly a lasting, understanding.

Hermione Lee

Pinned and Wriggling

The Diary of Virginia Woolf: Volume II, 1920-1924 edited by Anne Olivier Bell *Hogarth Press* £9.50

Between 1920 and 1924 Virginia Woolf published *Monday or Tuesday* and *Jacob's Room*, finished *Mrs Dalloway* and wrote nearly all of *The Common Reader*. She did a great deal of reviewing, and she and Leonard (who became literary editor of the *Nation* in 1923) expanded the Hogarth Press. In 1924 they moved from Hogarth House in Richmond to 52 Tavistock Square (keeping their country home, Monks House, at Rodmell). The move is evidence for Virginia Woolf's increased stability and for the couple's involvement in the London literary world. Volume II is the diary of an established figure in her late thirties, who is beginning (as she repeatedly tells herself) to feel famous: 'Reputation seems to accumulate . . . it gives me some pleasure.' And it covers the most crucial stage in her writing, when, by way of the experimental *Jacob's Room*, she works through to what is to be her characteristic style, and writes her first very good novel. By the end of the volume there is a strong sense of having arrived ('I can write & write & write now: the happiest feeling in the world') quite different from the tense, tentative mood of Volume I.

Fame has not mellowed her, however. The major obstacle to one's enjoyment of these diaries is still the staggering off-handedness with which Virginia Woolf dismisses her social and intellectual inferiors. There may be excuses for this: she's honest about her snobbery, it makes for good comic anecdotes, and perhaps she's *right* about the middle classes. Even so, 'how unpleasant to know Mrs Woolf', in the light of these remarks:

> The middle classes are cut so thick, and ring so coarse, when they laugh or express themselves . . . Am I merely snobbish in thinking it harder to say clever things & write clever books in Manchester than in Cambridge? . . . Edith, one of those worrying vague 'bodies', who compose the middle classes; wearisome women, machine made, but all bristling with their views . . . Suburban society on the Bus going up. Young man back from city. Young woman been shopping. 'Had a good day? Shall I take your parcels.' 'No; you might want to run away with them.' Arch badinage. Oh terrible country!

This last is very like Joyce's example of an 'epiphany' in *Stephen Hero* (a young man and girl exchanging similar 'badinage' on the steps of a Dublin house). Joyce's alertness to such commonplaces produced *Dubliners* and *Ulysses*, for which Virginia Woolf notoriously had no stomach ('a queasy undergraduate scratching his pimples . . . the book of a self taught working man, & we all know how distressing they are'). Her social intolerance and her areas of literary obtuseness are closely, and harmfully, related.

For all that, the diary should be read, and not only by *aficionados*. It is an extremely interesting social document, and a moving account of an important writer's development. It is invitingly well written, and often very funny. And it is not an egoistical diary. She frequently submerges self in order to pin down other people. It's good practice for the novelist ('In this book . . . I do my scales . . . I work at certain effects'), resulting in memorable anecdotes: Eliot ('sinister', 'pedagogic', 'formal') saying in a taxi at night in Hammersmith that 'humiliation is the worst thing in life'; Forster gossiping about life with mother in Weybridge: 'He found wasps in the mint sauce. This made Agnes drop the dish & go off leaving the dining room door open. Mrs Forster was cold to her for some days'; Katherine Mansfield 'drawing herself across the room, like some suffering animal'. Even the descriptions of the much-described centres of 'Bloomsbury' life read freshly and engagingly. Her tone can be affectionate:

> Nessa's room at Gordon Square . . . I go there and find that astonishing brightness in the heart of darkness. Julian coming in with his French lesson; Angelica hung with beads, riding on Roger's foot; Clive claret coloured & yellow like a canary; Duncan vague in the background, sitting astride a chair, looking with blurred eyes rather dimly.

But visual impressions are not her only means of recording life. The standard misapprehension about Virginia Woolf's work is that it is hazy and impalpable. The diary provides a useful corrective: it is bristling with facts and details. There's an enormous amount of riveting literary gossip – the awfulness of Middleton Murry on the *Athenaeum*, Desmond MacCarthy's rivalry (as the 'Affable Hawk' of the NEW STATESMAN) with Leonard on the *Nation*, Bruce Richmond's censorship of her essays in the *TLS*. The Woolfs' working life – and they worked extremely hard – is fully documented, from the problems of the Press to the indulgences of a new pen or of bread-making. But indulgences are rare. Virginia Woolf's work-ethic dominates her life

JOHN STEWART COLLIS
Living with a Stranger A Discourse on the Human Body £6.50

'I cannot imagine how anybody could read this book without joy.' **Bernard Levin,** *The Times*

'eloquently learned.. read him from Breath to Epilogue' **Ronald Blythe,** *The Listener*

'Collis is a master of the imagination' **Arthur Calder-Marshall,** *Times Literary Supplement*

'A most informative and imaginative book' **Philip Toynbee,** *Observer*

Macdonald and Jane's

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('Perhaps it's the legacy of puritan grandfathers') and is for her the only way of facing death:

> One ought to work – never to take one's eyes from one's work; & then if death should interrupt, well, it is merely that one must get up & leave one's stitching – one won't have wasted a thought on death.

What is most admirable in the diary is not the wit of the 'scattered & various & gregarious' social self, attuned to praise and criticism, but the resolute and adventurous progression of the writing self ('very, very concentrated, all at one point . . . merely a sensibility') in the face of depression. Even at her most stable, Virginia Woolf was threatened by the past ('People never get over their early impressions of death I think. I always feel pursued') and liable to moments of horror and to an incapacitating sense of futility. But it is a striking feature of the diary (and one which relates it most vitally to the novels) that when life seems 'so tragic: so like a little strip of pavement over an abyss', the writing is at its best, as in this account of the night the Cenotaph was unveiled:

> Such a lurid scene, like one in Hell. A soundless street; no traffic; but people marching. Clear, cold, & windless. A bright light in the Strand; women crying Remember the Glorious Dead, & holding out chrysanthemums. Always the sound of feet on the pavement. Faces bright and lurid . . . A ghastly procession of people in their sleep.

For this level of prose, if for nothing else, the diary is a valuable book to have. But it has to be said (though this is the fault of the Bloomsbury industry, and not of the diary) that for readers of Bell's *Life*, and of the *Letters*, and of *A Writer's Diary*, there is a marked sense of *déjà vu*. It is intriguing, however, to see what Bell and Woolf chose to extract. Leonard Woolf's 1956 selection is very sound, and uses most of the interesting passages about writing. But his methods look faintly comic, now we can see that the puzzlingly coy 'Lytton flirting on a green seat' (at Garsington) reads 'Lytton flirting with Byam Shaw on a green seat', and that the baffling entry for 26 September 1922 – 'Wittering. Morgan came on Friday; Tom on Saturday' (Forster and Eliot wittering on as usual?) – reads in full: 'Mary . . . half invited me to Wittering. Morgan came on Friday, etc.'

About this edition there can be no reservations. It is handsomely and scrupulously done, with maps of Richmond and the Ouse valley, and biographical footnotes – which are witty and stylish as well as full – extended or repeated from Volume I so that the volumes can be read independently. There is a modest and helpful introduction, and even the index is sometimes humorous, as in the entry for Nelly Boxall: 'Declares herself dying – taken worse – never to recover – her vapours – healthy in all but teeth – recovered, returns – panic struck – moping, but loyal.' It is an edition built to last.

Malcolm Bradbury

The Semi-Isle

The Sea, The Sea by IRIS MURDOCH *Chatto* £5.50

There are, perhaps, two kinds of Murdoch devotee. There are those readers, like myself, who count her among the very few significant and substantial novelists we have produced in current English fiction; there are those, less concerned with large estimates, who none the less love the Murdochian game, and find her books the novel of sentiment at its intense and clever best. Miss Murdoch always has satisfactions for both parties – satisfactions in some ways very predictable, with 19 novels now in the canon. There is, we now know, a familiar Murdoch world, with certain unmistakable kinds of character (the Love-Prisoner, the Neo-Saint, the Plotter, the Deathbed-Contemplative) and certain essential landscapes, sometimes intensely social, sometimes consciously spare, gothic and mythical. And there are the essential themes: a presiding concern with love, the committing centre of human action; with power, possession and imprisonment; with magic, enchantment and fantasy; with death – which, while taking us beyond all these things into matters of infinity, none the less evokes their essential significance and mortal centrality. As in John Fowles and Nabokov, Platonic anxieties recur: between the transcendent dream of love, and its given cases, its reality, its particularity. And certain familiar rituals recur, comic, repetitious dances of relationship; ceremonial and contrivance are in fact essential tools in her armoury. Miss Murdoch reflects much on matters of life, structures of relationship, and the claims of the human. She also practises fiction. Old Murdoch-hands grow expert at guessing which cards are being stacked to be dealt out later. Miss Murdoch, knowing that we know, plays the game back at us. For another essential weapon is surprise; and one of the richest surprises of all has been, in her recent novels, a deepening of the game, a new complexity of form, a new access of maturity.

The Sea, The Sea is clearly one of the 'mature' books – one of her longest, her richest, her most carefully paced. Love, again, is the kingdom in which everything occurs; it is past love projected and repeated in a mysterious and thoughtful present. This is one of her more magical novels, set in an economical landscape and seascape: somewhere in the north, in and around a gaunt Edwardian house, with a view across the sea, that 'image of an inaccessible freedom', that classic object of meditation, where there are yellow rocks, caves, a cauldron, a swimming place; a bay, a small village near by, with pub, shop, church, farm, a few bungalows, and a convenient hotel for unexpected visitors. But really there should be none; this place is for loneliness. The house has been taken by Charles Arrowby, over 60, a retired theatre director, expert in Shakespeare, especially devoted to *The Tempest*, a play that stays in our minds as we read. Charles has laid down his staff and drowned his book, hoping to repent of a life of monstrous egoism in a world of meditation. So this landscape is the landscape of his mind. Miss Murdoch is traditionally a good impersonator of male first-person narrators, and Charles, who is one of her most complex, is making this book. He is solitary, never having married, though there have been many lovers in his past. But the end of life, he says, is rightly thought of as meditation; and so he sets out to write a diary and memoir. Spareness is all; even his diet, when described, sounds like a handbook for minimalist gourmets. But Charles has not done with his past; rarely does this happen in Iris Murdoch. There are plotters about, and notably Miss Murdoch herself. So, soon, there are small intrusive mysteries; the sight of a possible sea-monster, poltergeist-like happenings inside his house; this semi-isle is full of noises. Then, slowly, as if by thought he has evoked them, those who have populated Charles's memories, the old lovers, the relatives and friends, begin to appear on his economical stage.

Especially there is Hartley, the lost first love from his innocent and unpractised youth, whose memory has since kept all other lovers at a distance, and so sustained his unmarried state. First in his mind, she turns up in his life.

Hannah Arendt

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Indeed she lives here in the village, an old woman past 60, trapped in an imprisoning and jealous marriage. Charles now has a generous range of more attractive mistresses to choose from; mistresses, in Iris Murdoch, are always enviably attentive to their old lovers. But in Hartley's old face Charles finds his young love and all meditation is now set aside as he takes up his staff again and directs and plots his gallery of friends in a campaign to set her free. This is handled by Miss Murdoch with a very fine skill; the portrait of Hartley, the old lady lost in a young love game, is one of the great successes of the book. As for the game, it evokes all those ambiguities of freedom and possession about which Miss Murdoch has written before. If one of the central images of this novel is the clean, various, and ambiguous sea, then another is that of the ambiguous prison of marriage, a chamber of dark horrors of enslavement and boredom which none the less is much desired. This is the diurnal world of love, and soon Charles himself is caught in its ambiguities. For, free in his house, Hartley becomes in turn his love prisoner. Violence and death follow; Charles passes through the dark borderlands between desire and contemplation, engulfing love and engulfing death. *The Sea, The Sea* is about the dark chill in loving, the conflict of sacrifice and egoism. It is, in fact, a merciless and painful book.

It is also an elegant one – a comic dance in the Murdoch manner. There is much contrivance. Miss Murdoch is an elaborate but also a very thrifty plotter, and the world she at first makes contingently she then goes on to spend as a pattern. This is part of the magic of invention. As in Fowles's *The Magus,* the magic is there partly for its flamboyance, partly to take us beyond reality into a world of dream and re-shaped identities. Late in this novel, Charles thinks again of Shakespeare's special powers and finds them in the fact that in his plays 'magic does not shrink reality and turn it into tiny things to be the toys of fairies'. This evidently is the late-comic intent of *The Sea, The Sea.* Miss Murdoch has written before of the late time in life when we pass between love and death, when old desires become present contemplations, and the 'secret vital busy inwardness' that drives our lives is forced to find meaning. Thus, from the patterns of the love game, and also the pattern of fiction, a kind of truth might emerge. That has always been Miss Murdoch's interest; but here, because of the careful pace and balance of this book, it all comes out with a special exactness. She lets her novel slowly accumulate its form, acquire its mysteries, its magic, its pattern. Then she lets it dissolve again, slowly, into chatter and ordinariness. Magic does not shrink reality, and *The Sea, The Sea* is a kind of *Tempest* on its own account, a book that explores the art of the novel and of magic, and also the need to elicit from life's facts and fantasies a meaning, a sense of the things that matter.

John Keegan

The Seafarer

Cochrane: Britannia's Last Sea-King by DONALD THOMAS *Deutsch* £7.95
Bligh by GAVIN KENNEDY *Duckworth* £8.50

Cochrane and Bligh personify two opposed and perennial naval types, the madcap hero and the small-minded tyrant, known in the flesh to a hundred crews whom they captivated or oppressed, and reproduced on the screen or the printed page in a dozen different forms during two centuries of Anglo-Saxon sea saga. The former certainly provided the model for C. S. Forester's Hornblower, and it would be almost impossible to disprove that the latter did not, through the alchemy of Charles Laughton on Herman Wouk's subconscious, emerge as Queeg of the *Caine*. By a happy coincidence, guaranteed to bring pleasure to the enormous readership of I-see-no-signal literature, each reappears this week as the subject of an excellent biography.

Cochrane was not only Hornblower (C. S. Forester virtually admitted as much). He also provided at first hand much of the raw material for the sea stories of Captain Marryat, his own Midshipman Simple on the frigate *Impérieuse* from 1806-09. But he was in fact a larger, wilder, more improbable and more significant figure than either novelist dared try on his readers. The son of a Scottish earl impoverished by investment in his own scientific discoveries (which included coal tar and coke), quite without any of the 'influence' which Michael Lewis has demonstrated was so essential to advancement in the Nelsonian navy, Cochrane nevertheless died an Admiral of the Fleet. Between joining the navy and attaining that rank, which he did at the age of 79, he had also commanded the navies of Chile, Greece and Brazil. He had sat as a vociferous radical in the unreformed parliament and made a close friend of Cobbett. He had been imprisoned for a fraud which he insisted he did not commit and enjoyed the satisfaction of extracting a free pardon 18 years later. He had married a beautiful and adored wife, whom he eccentrically insisted on leading three times to the altar, and fought one of his most decisive engagements with his five-year-old son, attired as a Chilean midshipman, beside him on the quarterdeck. He had invented a secret weapon judged so deadly that the Admiralty forbade disclosure of its nature until 1908. He had written a best-selling autobiography. He had made several fortunes. He had given a fig for no man in his days and was buried in Westminster Abbey. It was not a bad life.

It is a life which might write itself, but Donald Thomas, a poet and novelist as well as a biographer, has given it form and style. His battle descriptions are excellent, particularly that of the Basque Roads in 1809, when Cochrane almost achieved another Nile – and would have done so had his timid superiors entrusted him with more than a fraction of the

This English

We begin with two increasingly popular misuses: 'refute' in the sense of 'challenge' (or simply 'disagree with') and 'alibi' in the sense of 'excuse' (or simply 'evasion'). People tell me that 'incredible' and 'incredulous' have started doing duty for each other. Who needs it? We follow with two vague homophones: as our witty correspondents added, at the foot of their neatly pasted entries – 'Mango swamp and mangrove chutney' and 'How much down is needed to stop a vehicle?'.

☐ What the Tories are really saying here is that health service workers should not have the right to strike like any other worker. That I totally refute. **David Basnett** *The Times* (Eric Hitch).

☐ The alibi of an awful lot of people asked to judge the late Pope Paul VI is that only history will tell. **Peter Nichols** *Spectator* (Tom Billson).

☐ The island is about the same size as the Isle of Wight, highly under-developed and surrounded by a barrier reef of crocodile-infested mango swamps. **Peter David** *TES* (L. I. James).

☐ One man was arrested. As police tried to drive him away demonstrators laid down in the path of their vehicle. *Daily Telegraph* (E. Thompson).

Peter Forbath
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fleet. If there is a defect in his splendidly readable narrative, it is that he does not fully explore the origins of Cochrane's political radicalism, and he fails to place his overseas adventures in context. What recommended Cochrane to the insurgent leaders in Chile, Brazil and Greece was precisely that ability to achieve great results with small resources which had made him such an irritating subordinate in the Royal Navy. What drew him to them was not merely want of employment at home, allied to a strong mercenary streak, but an instinctive sympathy for the current tide of romantic nationalism, which made him one not only with Byron and the lesser-known philhellenes but also with Cialdini and the young Garibaldi.

Donald Thomas also treats as a minor issue his subject's quarrelsomeness. Gavin Kennedy's *Bligh* makes it the central theme. His book is very much out of the ordinary, not least these days in being beautifully produced, with fine type-faces on excellent paper, footnotes at the bottom of the pages, sensibly dispersed illustrations and attractive and useful endpapers. It is his decision to see Bligh as misunderstood, however, which makes his biography different from the dozens of books which have been devoted to the *Bounty*'s captain, crew, mutiny and last voyage to Pitcairn. Three of these, by Nordhoff and Hall, were best-sellers in the early 1930s and their popularity provided the impetus for the making of the unforgettable Charles Laughton film. Between them these visions, though particularly Laughton's portrayal of Bligh, have irredeemably cast him in the popular imagination as a sort of seaborne Nero, who took pleasure in inflicting arbitrary punishment and whose tastes demanded for their satisfaction its execution in ever more refined forms. Scholars have long known, and vainly pointed out, that this portrait was a caricature. Bligh was not an excessively harsh captain, was indeed a good deal more moderate than many. His pleasure was not in tyranny but in navigation, in which he had perfected a skill that had recommended him to Cook and secured him command of the essentially scientific mission the *Bounty*'s company did not allow him to complete. His subsequent voyage of 3,600 miles across the South Pacific with the loyal men in two tiny boats was a vindication of his powers of leadership, as well as being a triumph of seamanship. In the *Providence* he later succeeded in taking breadfruit from Tahiti to the West Indies without any trouble from the crew, and he could not be blamed if the slave population there did not find the food to their taste.

But he did make the mistake of ending his career at the centre of another mutiny, directed against him as Governor of New South Wales in 1808. Its details are unimportant, as too is Dr Kennedy's scholarly analysis of the rights and wrongs of the parties' cases in law. Two mutinies look not like carelessness but a defect of character, and the defect that stares through Dr Kennedy's meticulous and admirably written narrative is lack of a sense of humour. Of course Bligh was upright, honest, devoted to duty and the good of the service. Yet it is also clear that he never once in his life laughed at himself and was hair-trigger sensitive to anyone doing it for him. Cochrane was an expert at laughing at his superiors and at making others see the joke. If Cochrane had been Fletcher Christian, Bligh would have been cast adrift in the Thames Estuary. The story of the sailing-ship navy is really one long *Caine* mutiny, postponed, averted or sublimated, and could not have been anything else given the circumstances: endless voyages in claustrophobic conditions endured by a cast of characters transfixed on the issue of who was and who was not a gentleman, in the strict 18th-century sense. The crew, in a way, were an irrelevance. If the captain could carry his officers with him, the men would stay cowed. If he resorted to pomposities which would have provoked a duel ashore, he put his authority on the block. Cochrane understood that intuitively. Bligh failed to get the message.

Eventually the navy did. The extraordinary Dartmouth system, which would allow heirs apparent to be beaten by their cadet seniors without hint of *lèse-majesté*, was its answer to the apparently insoluble problem of subjecting gentlemen to shipboard dictatorship and preserving the Naval Discipline Act. It produced, through a revolution in manners as important as any in Norbert Elias's study, a new sort of human being, trained to smile in the teeth of indignities, major or minor, and swallow his bile against the day when seniority would put the sword in his hand, to release him to keep pigs. It was, in many ways, a dreadful revolution, but its critics should cast a glance at how perfect liberty worked among the pigkeepers of Pitcairn.

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John Montague

The Black Lake

After Gerard Dillon

Across the black lake
Two figures row their currach,
With slow, leaning strokes.
The grind of their rowlocks
Is rhythmic as a heartbeat.

Seven corn stooks stand
In a moonwashed field –
Seven pillars of gold.
Just beyond, two haystacks
Are tied down to the earth.

Three lean cattle munch
The heavy aftergrass, or
Raise a curious head towards
A stone walled corner where
A pair lean from each other.

The moon climbs the hill.
The night brims with light,
A pantry, silent with milk.
The rowers reach the cottage.
The couple do not speak.

Rosemary Dinnage

Desensitisation

Sex, Violence and the Media by H. J. EYSENCK and D. K. B. NIAS *Temple Smith* £5.95

By the time he is 14, the average American child will have seen 11,000 murders. On the screen, of course. Under school age, he will have spent about a third of his waking hours watching TV. When he grows up he will spend about 1,200 hours a year viewing and about five hours reading (can Eysenck and Nias really have got this one right? They give no sources at this point). In old-world Britain, where our sturdy youngsters of course spend their time playing Swallows and Amazons and watching the Changing of the Guard, things are agreed to be somewhat better. Nevertheless, the average number of violent episodes on our screens is estimated at about four per hour; a week's viewing of peak-hour television has come up with 76 sexual scenes. As for pornography, bear it in mind that in the US there are 264 magazines devoted to paedophiliac sex alone, and to get them published about 300,000 child models are used. If Eysenck and Nias's survey did no more than quote this string of figures it would have given most people, surely, unpalatable food for thought.

In fact, the book makes a serious attempt to outline all the issues relevant to the debate about the relation of violence and explicit sex on the media to the rise in crime and decline of established morality: the arguments that have been used on both sides; the different kinds of possible harmfulness involved; the various methods of research into the question; and just what the research has established. It isn't easy reading but it untangles some of the very tangled factors involved.

Anyone trying to make sense of the debate, the authors point out, probably has the impression that research results have been inconclusive. They confidently deny this; and, while at times they overstate their case, it is interesting in this connection to read what happened to the expensive commission set up in the US. Members were chosen from a list circulated to the major networks, who had the right of veto, and used it; in the end the chosen twelve included five people who worked in television. These threw their weight heavily in one direction, and so the report, which had to be unanimous, compromised on establishing a modest relationship between the viewing of violence and aggressive behaviour. The conclusions were slanted still further by newspaper headlines of 'TV Violence Held Unharmful to Youth', although some papers had extracted precisely the opposite message.

The authors are anxious to stick to hard facts, and they devote several chapters to describing what the very numerous research projects actually did. Here many marvels are reported. Psychologists stage attacks on squashy dolls, shouting 'Kick him!' and 'Pow!'; erections are measured by a 'mercury strain gauge'; young people are asked to agree or disagree with statements such as 'I believe in taking my pleasures where I find them'.

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There are vertiginously plunging graphs of 'Effects of weekly exposure to erotica', and tables comparing the relative shock value of violent cartoon cats and violent cowboys.

Professor Eysenck and Dr Nias complain that most of the research lacks stringency, but this would seem an understatement: much of it is lacking in ordinary common sense. Many of the studies are a variation on the theme of showing children (experienced viewers already) both violent and non-violent material, and monitoring possible effects on behaviour for a short time afterwards. It is perhaps the best that can be done, but it is like testing the hypothesis that a diet of ice cream and chips is bad by giving children one meal of these foods and then assessing the effect on their health. The experiments on exposure to pornographic material, though they may have cheered a few jaded sophomores, are particularly irrelevant since – for obvious reasons – they had to be conducted with adults and not with the vulnerable under-18s.

Nevertheless, by beavering away at their sometimes risible projects, the psychologists have between them produced quite a sizeable molehill of proof – more cannot be expected – that children are indeed the worse for watching ugly rubbish. Eysenck and Nias have been careful to point out that a correlation does not always imply a one-way train of cause and effect; even so, the little fragments of evidence mount up. Pre-school children shown a fight will imitate it afterwards, and go on remembering it; adults shown a violent film will give more punitive electric shocks in a later experiment; and so on. Many studies admittedly show nothing much one way or the other, but the authors point out, I think justly, that proof in a matter like this is so elusive that a negative result means little, while a positive one is all the more convincing for having the dice loaded against it.

Imitation is not the only demonstrated result of TV violence. It also appears, for instance, that children saturated with viewing have more distorted ideas of what the real world is like. And there is the question of 'desensitisation' – brutalisation would be a better word. An account is given of the official desensitisation of American soldiers to inflicting injury and death – ending with 'Dehumanisation of the Enemy'. It works for the army, so no doubt the same principle works with the children. Oddly enough, the possibility of arousing too much anxiety is not raised.

Eysenck and Nias advocate some censorship, of violent rather than sexual material, but come up against the usual problem of how this can be intelligently imposed. They make a plea for separating the debate from its association with left-wing and right-wing political attitudes, pointing out that communist countries are in fact extremely puritanical; and they deny the charge that the anti-permissive group want to indoctrinate people and their opponents to set them free – a cult of dehumanisation is as much an indoctrination as any other. Finally, they urge that no miracles should be expected from censorship; and that

> nothing should be banned because it is new, uncomfortable, or different; it is only when there is some evidence that it causes actual harm to individuals within society, in some measurable way, that such action becomes advisable.

They have gone a good way to providing such evidence.

Jeremy Treglown

Blunt Instruments

White Book by PAVEL KOHOUT *Heinrich Hanau, dist. Wildwood House* £5.95
SS-GB by LEN DEIGHTON *Cape* £4.95
Jack and Jill by HELEN HODGMAN *Duckworth* £3.95

Satire rarely translates well. It depends not only on common assumptions (no sweat in the particular case of Pavel Kohout's critique of Soviet oppression) but, more problematically, on a common shock-threshold. So *White Book* presents a dilemma. I wanted to find it a courageously funny act of protest by this Czech author against a regime whose response to such acts is (as the fiction reminds us) notably humourless. But after a few pages it reads predictably, a story that suffers in translation by comparison with the Western satiric fantasies it emulates (Pynchon, Vonnegut, Brautigan).

The first problem is that east of Berlin everyone needs something blunter than a rapier to get his ideas home. The nearer to Moscow, the truer this seems to become, if Vladimir 'Sandbag' Voinovich is any guide. We're in a particularly bad position to enjoy communist anti-establishment irony because the capitalist variety is – in proportion to the deviousness of its targets – so much subtler. Besides, in the Soviet case we don't really see the joke. The further an audience is from tragedy, the gloomier it wants to be made. What we ask from these chaps is a bit of pity and terror.

Kohout's absurdist story has a low surprise-quotient, too. It begins promisingly with a young PE teacher who, in defiance of socialist physics, learns to levitate. Every so often he just walks on the ceiling. What makes this idea in a damaging way more tragic than absurd is the inevitability of everything that follows. He becomes a folk hero but an official enemy; is involved in some bureaucratic confusions resulting from alternate attempts to exploit and obscure his achievement; is tried on various charges and sent to a psychiatric 'hospital' where, after prolonged resistance, he capitulates to gravity.

All this is presented as a sequence of heavily comic reconstructions of contemporary records, interspersed with accounts by people involved, transcripts of meetings, and so on, all annotated by anonymous officials. It's these *Dunciad*-like notes that pay off best, their plodding unimaginativeness a funny contrast with such freedom as the narrative manages. Historical 'errors' are corrected, jokes laboriously explained. In the end, though, it all seems under-realised: you need your own idiom – as provided in Stoppard's most recent plays – to bring the situation home in anything other than documentary terms.

The new Len Deighton asks a familiar question – what would it have been like if the Germans had won the war? – and gives it a characteristically exciting and straightforward answer. *SS-GB* is a mystery thriller about a Scotland Yard detective working for the occupying forces on a murder which turns out to involve the nuclear bomb race and a Resistance attempt to spring George VI from (yes) the Tower of London *and* a plot to bring the Americans into the war Europe has already lost. It's amazing that someone who writes as badly as Deighton can keep a story so steadily on the boil. There are two things he knows a lot about and keeps reminding you he knows a lot about: the German army and the geography of London. All the rest seems to have been put together from colour supplements and the backs of cornflakes packets – the art-historical conversations, for example ('You've got a wonderful little Turner watercolour there, Superintendent . . . Not many people realise that Turner could work to that degree of realism'), the Berni-menu descriptions of food and drink ('Kellerman took his time in preparing coffee topped with a large dollop of cream and dusted with a little powdered chocolate'), the journalistic short cuts ('The bomb exploded . . . scattering bits of the dismembered film crew into nearby Waterlow Park'). But it genuinely rattles along, with a bit of sex here and a bit of violence there and a new mystery every few pages right up to the end. A book to give your dad for Christmas.

I haven't yet read Helen Hodgman's unanimously praised first novel *Blue Skies*. *Jack and Jill* gives some inkling of what the fuss was about, though it's as saggy and shredded in the middle as a broken hammock. Douggie, the sheep-farming father of a motherless girl in the Australian outback (I think it's called), takes on a young hand, Jack, who has turned up by chance and who inevitably displaces him in Jill's affections. Douggie is displaced intellectually, too – Jill goes to university and becomes a famous author of children's books – and also, as it were, generationally: he gets old and dies. The pattern is repeated at the end of the book. Jill has married Jack and settled down with him, childless, in the now luxurious homestead. A younger girl turns up more or less accidentally and herself displaces Jill.

The ending is more 'happy' than this suggests, and I find it unsatisfying, if only because its self-acknowledged patness belies the confusions of the middle (Jack crippled in the war; his making the younger girl pregnant and leaving Jill in order to travel in pursuit of her with a homosexual drug-pushing lorry-driver). Hodgman is aiming at Shakespearean comedy: the title refers not to the nursery rhyme but to Puck's lines in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 'Jack shall have Jill: Nought shall go ill', answering the (in fact much more Hodgman-like) dark irresolution of *Love's Labours Lost*. But Shakespeare's comedies believe in love and marriage in a way that the novel obviously doesn't; and if this is the point, it's too arcane and too uncertain. Their resolutions are helped, too, by the fact that the characters being untangled have never been distinguishable in the first place – which is happily untrue of Hodgman's, and particularly of Douggie, whose limitations are affectionately and vividly sent up: 'It was beaut to see her,' Hodgman writes of his return from a trip to Sydney; 'be it ever so humble, there's no place like home, he told them.' Hodgman does the farm very well, too, with its dust and snakes and sheep suffering from nodule worm. But neither the details nor the plotting quite hold up the irrevocably – and, in a way, rather promisingly – unravelled middle.

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Julian Barnes

2 + 2 = 5

You may have noticed that Barry Norman changes his clothes an awful lot during *The Hollywood Greats* (BBC-1). One minute he's glistening in leather atop some hillside, the next he's relaxing in a check button-down before the rusting logo of a derelict studio lot (the hair, of course, never changes, its lacquered mound guarding the secret of his ears – are they, perhaps, very pointed?). Does he simply need a new continuity girl; or is it that contact with the Greats – at least, with those who knew the Greats and want to bitch about them – makes him feel he needs to match each mood and sentence with an apt garment? Because a lot of Hollywood has rubbed off on our Barry; in particular, a keenness for legend which remains untarnished by the boyishly sardonic stance he likes to think he's adopting. This makes his series enjoyable viewing – like turning the pages of a Silver Screen Bumper Fun Book – but craven towards the big myths, especially the myth which claims that stars function on a radically different psychological system from other people.

Hollywood, Barry and the Fun Book all believe in Mysteries and Tragedies; yet most of Filmland's mysteries are just ordinary events which the publicity machines either over-exploit or find embarrassing. The chief Mystery of Jean Harlow was why she married her second husband, who was impotent; a fact Harlow might have known already. Yet since she was, contrary to her image, 'a very clean-talking girl' who was 'not the sort of person who slept with men', the attraction of a man who wasn't grabby-handed, was nice to her and quite a bit older (like her third husband), and who, as an influential studio boss, got her invited to the best parties, would seem very straightforward. Lots of people don't marry for sex. All of this, however, cuts little ice with Barry, since he knows that Hollywood is divided into stickmen and goddesses, who only get off the job to make the odd inconvenient movie. Mystery No 2 (or Tragedy No 1) was why, after a few weeks of marriage, the husband committed suicide, first dousing himself in Harlow's scent. Was *that* a strange act, for an impotent man married to a beautiful woman? As the splendid Adela Rogers St Johns, who looks like W. H. Auden and talks like one very tough lady, put it, 'Maybe he took one long look at himself and saw himself as he really was – and then, like Ernest Hemingway, you have to shoot yourself.'

Stalin's wife didn't shoot herself for quite this reason: more because she'd taken a long look at what her bloke had done to Russia and had seen it as it really was. For one thing, he'd managed, in the course of forcible collectivisation, to reduce the horse population by 50 per cent and the sheep and goat population by two-thirds. This statistic stuck in the mind during *Stalin: The Red Tsar* (LWT) because of its rare precision; we haven't yet had the numbers of human losses. The only other notable statistic, in this programme which seems to consist more and more of background music, was on a poster exhorting workers and peasants to hurry along with the five-year plan: it read '2+2=5'. Was it fortuitous that Orwell later used the same equation in *1984*? Winston Smith writes in his diary, 'Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two makes four', and O'Brien, when breaking him in Room 101, gives the Party's reply: 'Sometimes, Winston. Sometimes they are five. Sometimes they are three. Sometimes they are all of them at once. You must try harder. It is not easy to become sane.'

The return of *Face the Press* (Tyne Tees) under the chairmanship of George Ffitch has been rather uneasy; even so normally relaxed and assured a thinker as Lawrie McMenemy has been made jumpy by some erratic questioning. This week, faced with Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir David McNee, the team showed a dismaying lack of newshound instinct. Maybe they were all fazed by McNee's full-fig uniform, his soft-spoken PC-Plod act, and the beguiling way he called them all 'Mister'. They certainly failed to pursue the one incriminating clue McNee let drop. Asked why he wanted the power to hold suspects for up to three days without access to a lawyer, he replied that this wasn't a surprising request, since the police already did exactly that, and he merely wanted official acknowledgment of what was already going on: 'I'm trying to make things easier for the suspect in some ways.' Neither Ffitch, Martin Walker nor the ubiquitous William Deedes thought fit to point out that if this is current police custom, then current police custom blatantly flouts the Judges' Rules, and what does McNee think of that? But they didn't deign to follow this up, and merely sat there looking a little shamefaced, as if maybe they didn't have a back light between them on their bicycles. Perhaps McNee has this effect on everyone. At any rate, his mixture of homeliness – 'When I was a boy my mother said "So far and no further" and I took on board what she meant' – twinkling deference and satisfaction with most police business made one nostalgic for the intellectual and moral rigour of Sir Robert Mark.

Russell Davies has grudgingly allowed me a brief para in which to encapsule the giddying happiness of the start of the football season – or, to be more accurate as far as the majority of us are concerned, the *MOD* and *TBM* season. The big surprise of the first weekend was that there was no coverage of the one match which, I would guess, 95 per cent of *MOD/TBM* fans wanted to see: Notts Forest v Argentina (safety regulations, apparently). Predictably, the ailing *Match of the Day* (BBC-1) fell far behind *The Big Match* (LWT): it had duller games (who can have imagined that Bolton v Bristol City would produce more than some early-season, yet relegation-haunted, clogging from the ageing semi-stars with which both clubs are packed); sillier commentators; dreadful opening titles (think of another year of these Jimmy Hill placards); and slightly more questionable values. Norman Bite-Yer-Leg Hunter was strangely fêted as player of the programme – largely on the grounds of being very old – and drew this praise from Hill: 'I always think his greatest asset is that he makes the penalty area a less pleasant place to penetrate' (tell that to the Yugoslav old Norm maimed in Rome). All that *MOD* had of note was a new goal-celebrating cry from Barry Davies of 'Oh, CREAMER!', plus the sight of the Everton front three all sporting close-season homeperms: which triple had the Toni? Meanwhile, on Sunday, *The Big Match* (LWT) offered more vivid play (Arsenal v Leeds), and the type of commentary which is excitedly appreciative without seeming rabid. Brain Moore (it must be the high forehead which always makes me mistype his name) is so patently on the right side about everything in football that we are even ready to excuse his Colemanisms: 'Even though it's a boy's sized shirt, there's a real man inside Brian Flynn's shirt' was one of his more contorted efforts. The newly announced 'Big Match Personality of the Month Competition' sounds a dreadful idea: we are bound to be spoon-fed with suggestions for 'honest, humorous and sportsmanlike' candidates, and to be chirpily bullied into voting for 'characterful' referees, 'loyal' fans, and probably that boring little dog which pees on the football. But Brain will doubtless charm us into enthusiasm for this idiocy, too, in due course.

Films

John Coleman

Pie in the QSKY

FM (A) *Plaza*
Convoy (A) *Classic, Oxford Street; Scene; ABCs Shaftesbury Avenue, Fulham Road, Bayswater, and Edgware Road*
Movie Maker Ten Best *NFT 2 September*

What *has* come over the American movie scene? Only last week, we had Joan Micklin Silver's *Between the Lines* – a douce glance at a youngish group running a one-time underground weekly now on the verge of respectability and about to be bought out – and it already looks like a whaleboned if not steely structure compared with the knitted middle-brow's John A. Alonzo's *FM*. Here we have another lovely gang, producing another very popular and vaguely counter-culture show: the number-one Rock station, QSKY, in Los Angeles, with the minimum of commercials. Obviously, this state of affairs can't last – all too true to be good – and a Chicago corporation tries to move in, cash in, by planting 'Join the Army' ads in prime time. To do Ezra Sacks justice, the first half-hour of his script is pretty funny and persuasive, even for someone who cordially loathes disc-jockeys in all their guises and flavours as much as I. Folk-heroes of our days they may be, but I would almost bring back Capital punishment

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(preferably in the form, Kubrick-style, of playing good music, *ff*, 24 hours a day for a month into their padlocked ears).

FM's 105 minutes include a lot of instrumental noise with accompanying words: fans of such stuff may care to know Linda Ronstadt – a jolly lady, probably, when she isn't shouting into one of those phallic mikes – and Jimmy Buffett, aurally surnamed to a B, deliver concert stints. But the real, central interest revolves round the boys and girls who talk nonsense during the turntable breaks. God-like, good-looking Dugan (Michael Brandon), programme director and everybody's pal – grief, even I liked him – and a crafty assortment of more, attractive kooks: 'Mother' (Eileen Brennan), 'The Prince of Darkness' (black Cleavon Little), insecure, self-loving, dreamboat, blond Eric Swan, (Martin Mull, in a very nice performance), *et al.* (no, Al's the near-top Chicago villain), do their mindless things, air themselves as if they mattered.

It is their confidence in their mattering, as opposed to nattering, and the film's wholehearted endorsement of this, that really got me down. But there is always a deeper descent into hell and Mr Alonzo drops one into it. The cute staff come out in solidarity, stage a sit-in, when the moneymen put the pressure on. Crowds of kids cheer them on from the sidewalks as they make balcony appearances. The police, yet, are shown as divided in their sympathies. Then absolute Mr Big himself, the oldie behind the buy-out, turns up. And trumps, with it. He fires his minions on the spot and, for all I know or care, was played by Frank Capra. I have said there are comic lines and there are, but when the baddie shouted from the mob, 'I admire your guts, Jeff' (Dugan/Brandon), the only gagging around was mine. Much more of this, and the present column will either take to the couch or sociology. When our transatlantic cousins fall into a self-congratulatory mood, they don't mean maybe.

By a curious happenstance, the gritty and overrated Sam Peckinpah has also seen a movie, *Convoy,* emerge in London this week, all about tough truckers and their citizen-band wavelength communications and positively suffused with sweetness and light: anyway, at first sight. But first sight will do. The most agreeable thing about Kris Kristofferson is that his name comfortably spreads out to fill a Panavision image. He is a truck-driver going under the *nom de garage,* Rubber Duck, and we all know what that rhymes with: luck. This Duck appears to be accepted – as Dugan was in *FM* – as a natural-born leader. In what direction is the problem. I am prepared to be convinced that the detail of the on-the-road verbal exchanges is laconic *verismo,* although my hand-out is a shade unreassuring on this: the screenplay is by B. W. L. Norton 'from the Hit Record by C. W. McCall' (and I quote). There's stretching it a bit.

What disturbs is Peckinpah's making a bad Western under the guise of current vehicular *mores.* Duck is, frankly, a sitting one – in two senses. To perpetuate the rotten joke, he stands for nothing. When he and other roadies take off in their giant, inhuman lorries, the implication is that they are big men at big wheels: they come over as romanticised steers, or steerers. There has to be a limit to picaresque and this overdrives it. Ernest Borgnine, as the spaced-tooth, grinny sheriff Lyle, goes through his 'man-you-love-to-hate' motions; has it in for old Duck, and the long, long chase – with trade-mark Peckinpah slow-motion crashes and bar-brawls to pad out thin matter – can only be entertaining those 20th-century centaurs who are half-man, half-auto: all torque.

The event, which certainly chalks up mileage to its credit, has a long line of truckers following Duck (on the run), a state Governor up for re-election trying to join Duck's aimless bandwagon for votes, Ali MacGraw bronzed and super-looking as his pick-up but given a camera instead of lines, and a fake, mythic ending, accompanied by a lot of on-screen laughter. The US populace crawl out of their shanty-towns to support Duck's immoral drive to nowhere. Something is happening over there that I fail to understand, unless they are at once hugging themselves for being so different (i.e. the available ethnic mix) and gazing back in nostalgia to the times when families went to the flicks. Sorry, but this one still has a nasty, *macho* undertow. I saw the Ten Best Amateur Films of 1978. What were the worst like?

Carol Rumens

To Elizabeth Barrett-Browning

on the re-printing of 'Aurora Leigh'

We'd heard, of course, about your
father's fetters
– and how you slipped them. That was
freely bandied
around by schmalzy film-producers, candied
for the gallery! We peeped in on
those letters

poet to poet, fierce, quick-witted, shy,
revealing you among your books, encouched
but never languid, bright eyes, crisply-ruched
nightgown, a little dog to watch you sigh.

These days, the Cardiographic Institute
stands on the site in Wimpole Street.
You'd smile
perhaps to see that still
your shade consults in matters of the heart.

One sonnet made our fusty 'Poems
for Schools'
– 'How do I love thee . . .' – sweet
as bridal blooms.
'A' level, though, was strictly for
the groom's
fraught monologues and bouncing fol-de-rols.

Better not be a poet, but far worse
a female poet in love!
She'll sprout more legends than laurels;
she'll move
posterity, but not in her own words.

Thank fashion, then, we've found
Aurora Leigh
flexing her secret muscles, fighting fit.
Like you, she plumps for art
and gets her man! That's epic poetry!

Theatre

Ian Hamilton

Peek-A-Boo

Vieux Carré *Piccadilly*
Ivanov *Old Vic*

Theatrefolk have a way of boring you with jibes at what they call 'the critics' and (well, let's say those I've come across) like telling tales about how swarthy playwright X biffed weedy critic Y in the stalls bar at The Queens, or how one or another of the (always plentiful) grand ladies of the boards delivered that exquisitely timed snub to a loutish hack who'd actually *forgotten* what he'd said about her back in 1954. In stage circles, it is fairly well taken for granted that something shoddy or vindictive is afoot when plays get 'bad reviews'. At best, it is believed that an ugly lapse of manners has occurred. I mean, how would *you* feel, darling, if . . . etc?

Without having given it a great deal of thought, I'd always assumed that in the theatre there was more or less the same balance between critic and performer as I'd got used to in the world of books; the one's narcissism jelling neatly with the other's malice. Admittedly, theatre types are more reckless about exposing their vanities, and theatre critics more grandiose in savouring their power, but otherwise was there really anything to choose between, say, wading through a weekly batch of fiction or lit. crit. and dutifully taxiing to second nights? After three weeks, it seems a long time since I took this childish view.

For a start, however good a play is you can never sensibly describe it as 'unputdownable'. Book critics invented that lumpy old adjective because their usual habit is to read in lumps – a bit tonight, a bit tomorrow morning. Theatre critics lack this crucial benefit – once they're in, they're in, and have only the prospect of one brief interval to sustain them through whatever 90-minutes' worth of thoughtfulness they've been sent along to judge. Little wonder that a bad evening at the theatre puts you in a worse humour than a bad novel: in every single play I've seen this past three weeks, someone onstage is to be seen smoking and drinking during the 15 minutes immediately preceding the yearned for half-time break. One of them even went so far as to enhance this torture by mounting a play-within-a-play and to have characters on stage actually *barracking* it: booing, hissing, drinking, smoking – theatre as dream-fulfilment, to be sure, but no one in the audience felt bold enough to venture a quick thrust of audience participation. On this particular occasion, the interval stampede was awesomely brutish and deranged, and it was hard to believe that a majority of those crazed contenders for the bar were to be found, ten minutes later, respectfully reseated for another dose.

I could go on, but oughtn't to really without first admitting that I've just paid a visit to Tennessee Williams's new play *Vieux Carré* at

Benedict Nightingale will return next week.

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the Piccadilly, and – critic or no critic – simply failed to last the pace. After 90-minutes' worth of wretched self-parody (all the old Williams clichés, but with the gay stuff now permitted to be spiced up and explicit), a laughably ponderous production (much self-congratulatory swivelling of a very rusty-sounding revolving stage), and acting of a screeching falsity that only a writer as revered and talentless as this one could so fulsomely induce, it seems to me that no sane spectator could fail to prefer traffic noise to yet more of *that*.

The setting of the play is a New Orleans flop-house presided over by an Anna Magnani-style landlady whose life's study is to study the lives of her various decrepit tenants. The carousel stage takes us from room to room, pretending to reveal complicated human dramas but in fact relishing a peek-a-boo obsession with whether or not both or only one of the two young men in the cast will finally come out. The master of these ceremonies is a seedy, silk-dressing-gowned old pederast who makes it his business to bump into people on the stairs and bears a forlorn resemblance to photos of the more-youthful-than-he-now-is Tennessee.

To turn to a different planet, the new production of *Ivanov* at the Old Vic moves a shade too ponderously for my liking, but is intelligent and uncompromising in its willingness to let the excellent Derek Jacobi find his own rhythm. The risk with this character is that he will seem as boring (in the end) as he believes himself to be, and it is precisely this risk that Jacobi's performance acknowledges and toys with. He doesn't, that's to say, overheat Ivanov's intermittent bursts of vigour – there must be a strong temptation to do this, if only to cope with the other problem with the play: what was Ivanov like before he got like this? He himself tells us, at some length, and so do others, but it is essential that we believe all trace of what he used to be really has run into dust.

Sport

Russell Davies

Diabolical

The return of the football season means a return to bad writing. Not that our cricket correspondents are uniformly wonderful: but they do have time to fashion a phrase and to give it an appropriate setting. Furthermore, they have a good deal of technical information to impart, and technical specificity can be a great cleanser of prose. The soccer-writer, by contrast, is generally writing while he's watching, sending the first half of his report down the telephone at half-time. At best, he will have only a few minutes at the end of a game to polish and co-ordinate his impressions, and purge them of repetitions (working at speed one can easily get stuck on a favourite adjective); clusters of adverbs (writing all the time about the manner in which things are done allows one to fall terribly impressively quickly into nasty habits like this); and the mixed metaphor (even in metaphor-phobic 1978, the red tide is still surging stirringly relentlessly upfield, snapping at the heels of the opposition like some demented virago etc).

The trouble with hasty writing is that it becomes a habit. Given enough time to think, write and revise at leisure, one is likely to find oneself still peddling the same sort of rubbish that spilled out of the pen in last Saturday's 4.40pm panic. This has happened in a big way to *The Times* man, Geoffrey Green. It is not malice that makes me single out Mr Green. Indeed nothing I may say will cancel out the services to sports journalism and broadcasting which won him the OBE in 1976. The fact is, simply, that he has recently produced a book which will serve as an everlasting monument to the football journalist's crimes against the language. Entitled *There's Only One United*, and published by Hodder & Stoughton at £5.95, it is the official centenary history of Manchester United, and the unofficial Catalogue of Match-Day Manglers.

If the word 'like' were deleted from Mr Green's vocabulary, his life and ours would be made a lot easier. Even so brutal a censorship would not stop him writing things like: 'Himself a creative wing half in his day, the *Manchester Guardian* in 1934 had once . . .' etc; nor would it equip him with the useful pudor that will stay a man's hand from writing 'The atmosphere was electric' and putting a full stop after it. But it would certainly save Mr Green the trouble of ransacking his brain for such wonky parallels as: 'It was silent and peaceful as the mighty stand stood empty and expectant, like an operating theatre awaiting the coming operation.' The worst of a horror like this is that it spills over into the next sentence, hence: 'Soon it would be filled with a roaring multitude' – like most operating theatres, eh? – 'as the warm juice of emotion poured over it for each approaching new challenge'. It is wise not to think too hard about that one on an empty stomach.

The sentence after *that*, believe it or not, takes us on to a new level of confusion, where it is actually possible to believe that the image is more real to Mr Green than the thing observed. There he is (this much we have established) looking down on the Old Trafford football ground: 'I sat there in a kind of wonder at this towering oak tree, trying to imagine the tiny acorn from which it grew a hundred years ago.' Well, he would, wouldn't he? Oak trees on football grounds don't grow on trees, as it were. Mr Green slips in the odd 'as it were', when he feels he may have overstepped the verges of poesy, but he is magnificently unembarrassed by a sentence like: 'To seek the kudos is a human trait but to apportion the praise is to skate on thin ice.' Nor is a moment's self-doubt visible in his cheerful assertion that 'the United machine had again begun to purr smoothly like a well-oiled machine'.

Are there editors, I wonder, at Hodder & Stoughton? If so, why are they unaware that not even a trip up the Odessa Steps could be described as 'the Manchester Odessy into Europe'? Is it beyond them to point out that, however cultured the footballing style of Tottenham Hotspur in the early Sixties became, it could in no way be characterised as 'rather too obtruse' for the rest of the field? Could they not restrain Mr Green's tiny, mistimed lunges into other journalistic jargons ('Meanwhile modern soccer has got with the pop scene')? Faced with the spectacle of Mr Green's meaninglessly matching one image against another ('To pick one's way through the maze of the struggle is to work gingerly through a minefield'), could they not ask him to make up his mind?

True, the task they faced was, as it were, a labour of Heracles. Some very imposing structures would have had to be dismantled ('the giant Torres rose like some Eiffel Tower to a diagonal cross' – not even *the* Eiffel Tower, which has never been seen to leave the ground in any case) if complete sense had been insisted on throughout. The briefest inquiry into Canadian government finances would have necessitated instant revision of the claim that 'After a long hunt Busby, like a Canadian mounted policeman, got his man for the outlay of £25,000.' Further information would have undoubtedly been asked for on a certain well-connected soccer star called St James's Park: 'Born at Ashington, a nearby mining village in Northumberland, with a famous football uncle in Jackie Milburn, the Newcastle and England Centre-forward, St. James's Park was . . .' And Mr Green might even have been persuaded not to quote himself. Reports that include hieroglyphs like 'In trying to establish an Identikit of the whole problem, one is soon caught up in a web of conflicting opinion. It is as elusive as trying to imprison a shaft of sunlight in a matchbox' ought to be left for dead in the first place.

I wouldn't mind, but Mr Green is the man who insists, with the utmost solemnity (page 63), that 'Words are not toys. They should be treated with care.' He also makes the mistake of agreeing with Sir Neville Cardus (page 31) that 'Style is the man'. Let us hope not. Let us hope instead, as another football season starts, that there is some wheezy old truth in the cliché that soccer teams write, and rewrite, their own history on the field of play.

Weekend Competition

No 2529 **Set by Mr Chubby**

OK, you guys: cop a load of Bill Greenwell's first winner below, the Gnomic Nonet. Now, in order to make sure we get some entries, we'll only hold you to the overall syllable structure; rhyme-scheme, etc, is up to you. But just make them biographical, will you; oh, and put the subject's name in the first line. By 8 September. We have every confidence.

Result of No 2526
Set by Farouche Features

We asked you to invent weekend comps which are so difficult, so boring, or so recherché that no one would ever enter for them.

Report **by Al Fresco**

As some of you rumbled, this is a comp we set when the Suggestions Folder gets worryingly slim. The near misses will keep us supplied for quite a few weeks to come; and we may even inflict some of the winners on you – witness 2529. Thanks a lot, suckers. Six quid to Greenwell; two for each of your other ideas.

Cosmopolitan Caligula
Consummated his sis: you'll a-
Ppreciate initiat-
Ive got rhythm, set loose
Imperialist
Rome. As he kissed
Her, riot:

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'Why, it
'S Zeus!'

Thus the Gnomic Nonet, a form invented by Ashby de la Zouche and his sister. The rules are strict; nine lines, the first of which must have nine syllables, the second eight syllables, and so on. The first line must include the name of a well-known magazine and a Roman Emperor, and should rhyme abysmally with the second line. The third line begins with a dactyl, and ends with a dactyl, with one spare syllable in the middle. The fourth line should rhyme with the ninth and contain the title of a well-known popular song. The fifth line rhymes with the sixth, and is composed of one word only. The seventh line should conceal the name of a living, but by no means important, writer, and should rhyme with the eighth. If the last line could please contain the name of an important Deity, then the rules will have been fully observed. Oh yes, the subject-matter is up to you. We're sure it won't take you *that* long to master the form, so a maximum of seven entries each. By 8 September, please.

Observing a strange ritual one Halloween, Dorothy Parker once asked a friend what was the nature of the elaborate rigmarole being performed by the leading participant. Her friend replied: 'She's ducking for apples.' Without pausing for breath, Dorothy replied, 'There, but for a typographical error, is the story of my life.' Making at least 11 typographical errors, write the story of the lives of any of the following: Lord Montgomery of Alamein, Nebuchadnezzar, Frank Bough. Max: 150 words. By 8 September, if you wouldn't mind.

BILL GREENWELL

Using only the letters in 'Sergei Kausov' and 'Christina Onassis' write an epithalamium on the marriage of the happy couple as it might appear in Jennifer's Diary or Pravda.

GERRY HAMILL

I have long believed that the letters of the alphabet are not arranged in the most suitable order. Rearrange them, please in the best possible order.

R. D. C. CONDON

NO PLAY TODAY: this announcement could be given a novel – and profitable – twist by any really progressive cricket club willing to stage a Japanese No Play in place of a washed-out game. Supply a translation of one such, suitable for alfresco performance in the rain and capable, if necessary, of lasting all day.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

Make a small sculpture from pipe-cleaners to represent 'The Unknown Non-Political Prisoner' and then write a sonnet describing it. Drawings and/or photographs of the sculpture must also be sent so that the judges may consider the appropriateness of the poetry.

J. TIMSON

A sonnet to celebrate the Government's success in keeping down the rate of inflation. The name of a Chancellor to appear in each line; no parodies of Shakespeare, please.

Any passage from Enid Blyton as rewritten by J. R. R. Tolkien. 150 words limit, only 75 of which may be proper names.

ROY KELLY

All we want this week is a sonnet – any type, any subject. The only small catch is that every line must be a perfect palindrome. No more than three each, please, as Fat Jeff fell down the scenic lift-shaft and has to carry the mail-bags left-handed.

WAYNE SIDESADDLE

Extracts, please, from the literature of Atlantis.

A. BOTEMAN

By taking the first sentence of the opening of one famous novel, the second of a second, the third of a third, you ought to be able to construct a terribly intriguing brand-new novel of between six and eight sentences, shouldn't you?

B. MOORING

Among translators of Proust, Scott-Moncrieff Rules O.K.? Well, take his version of the famous para where Marcel dunks the madeleine and *re*-translate it back into French in the style of *either* Moidegaulle *or* Mademoiselle de Lespinasse, Anatole France, Talleyrand, Colette, Joan of Arc, either of the Goncourt Bros., General Boulanger, Josephine Baker or Mistinguett.

KIT CARPENTER

O RISKS PATE; ROT 'IS PEAKS; IT'S PEARS O.K.; TEAK OR PISS. These are all very ingenious anagrams of Spiro Keats. Competitors are invited to supply another twenty such, each funnier than the one before.

JIM ANTHONY

We remember our monarchs with the help of the rhyme beginning 'Willie, Willie, Harry, Ste'. Devise a similar aide-memoire for the genealogical table in chapter one of St Matthew's Gospel, beginning at 'Abraham begat Isaac'.

Using the Nibelungenlied verse form and Chaucerian vocabulary, try to justify the constant broadcasting of weather forecasts. Limit 12 lines.

TED THOMPSON

IF fat fur stew don't suck seed
Trite write rye again.

Using the above method, transform any one of Shakespeare's sonnets into meaningful gibberish.

K. S. LIGHTFOOT

With an election in the offing, competitors are invited to provide an election address by any political party in the style of Richard Brathwaite, Sir Thomas Wyatt, Lorenzo Dow or Sarah Doudney.

Write an intelligible sonnet, or 120 words of prose, containing the following words (and in this order): hypocaust, ulna, vicinage, scrotum, blanco, troika, epiphyte, macron, avocet, paederast, rushy, menhir, oyez, lard.

NAOMI MARKS

STUC (The Scottish Trade Union Congress) might in a careless moment be confused with SPUC (The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child). Columbia Broadcasting System shares initials with The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament. There are many other pairs. Competitors are invited to prepare reports from delegates who had turned up for the wrong conference without ever realising it.

C. N. GILMORE

It has often been postulated that an infinite number of monkeys on an infinite number of typewriters would eventually produce the complete works of Shakespeare. Competitors are asked to submit extracts from 'works' that might be so produced, which somehow fail to make the mark.

Competitors are asked to change any nine-letter word to any other nine-letter word, changing one letter at a time. The resulting sequence of words should form a grammatically correct English sentence.

A. G. COHN

Copies of Scott's *Provincial Antiquities of Scotland* will be awarded to the best précis of any Scott novel consisting of exactly 150 words, the number of vowels adding up to exactly 400 and the consonants to exactly 600.

JOYCE JOHNSON

Competitors are invited to write a sonnet, using the English rhyme scheme and containing the following words (one per line in the order given): Compare, temperate, darling, lease; hot, complexion, declines, changing; Summer, possession, brag, lines; breathe, long.

GERARD BENSON

Tony Miles

Chess

No 97 **The IBM Tournament**

The annual IBM tournament at Amsterdam turned out to be a two-horse race between the Dutch champion Timman and the Hungarian GM Zoltan Ribli. By the sixth round they had opened up a lead of one point over the field, a gap which was never closed. For most of the time Timman led by half a point, but in the penultimate round a win over Romanishin clinched the tournament. Short draws in the last round left Timman first with 9½/13 and Ribli second with 8½. A further point back were Hort (Czechoslovakia) Dzindzihashvili (Israel) and Pfleger (W. Germany).

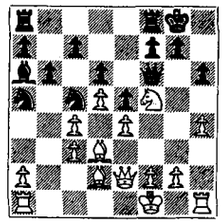
I had a disastrous tournament. In one spell four consecutive good or winning positions were wasted, including one where I repeated a won position three times in time trouble. Two late losses to tail-enders deepened the gloom. My only positive contribution was the following effort.

White: Z. Ribli **Black: A. J. Miles**

1.N-KB3, N-KB3; 2.P-B4, P-B4; 3.N-B3, P-Q4; 4.PxP, NxP; 5.P-KN3, P-KN3; 6.B-N2, B-N2; 7.0-0, 0-0; 8.NxN, QxN; 9.P-Q3, N-B3; 10.P-QR3, P-N3; 11.R-N1, B-N2; 12.P-QN4?! The consistent continuation, but Black has a surprising and strong continuation. **12 . . . Q-R7! 13.B-K3, N-Q5! 14.BxN. PxB.** The bishop pair and the weak QB3 square give Black a clear advantage. **15.R-R1, Q-Q4; 16.Q-R4, B-B3; 17.Q-B2, QR-B1; 18.KR-B1, B-Q2; 19.Q-N2, B-R5; 20.N-K1, Q-Q2; 21.Q-R2, R-B6; 22.RxR, PxR; 23.R-B1, P-K3; 24.P-K3, R-B1; 25.P-Q4, P-K4; 26.P-Q5, P-B4; 27.B-B1.** If 27.P-K4, B-R3 wins. **27 . . . P-K5, 28.N-B2, R-Q1; 29.N-Q4.** On 29.R-Q1, P-QN4 leaves White hopelessly placed. **29 . . . BxN; 30.PxB, P-B7; 31.B-B4, K-B1?** 31 . . . P-B5! threatening P-B6 (32.PxP, Q-N5ch and Q-Q8ch) would eliminate the technical difficulties. **32.B-N3, BxB; 33.QxB, QxP; 34.QxQ, RxQ; 35.RxP, K-K2! 36.R-B4,** Neither 36.R-B7ch, R-Q2; nor 36.R-Q2, R-Q2 intending K-K3-Q4 is satisfactory. **36 . . . R-Q2; 37.P-KR4,** Or 37.K-B1, K-K3; 38.K-K2, K-Q4; 39.R-Q1, R-KB2! 40.K-K3, P-KN4; and P-B5ch wins. **37 . . . K-K3; 38.P-N5! K-Q4; 39.R-R4.** A clever defence. **39 . . . P-KR3; 40.K-B1, P-KN4; 41.PxP, PxP; 42.K-K2, P-B5; 43.PxP, PxP; 44.K-Q2, R-QB2;** On 44 . . . K-K3; 45.K-K2, K-B4 White has 46.P-Q5! K-K4; 47.P-Q6! **45.K-Q1, P-K6; 46.PxP, P-B6! 47.K-K1?** The move that worried me was 47.K-Q2! Then if 47 . . . R-B7ch; 48.K-K1, K-K5; 49.RxP, KxP; 50.R-K2ch. Or 47 . . . K-K5; 48.P-Q5ch! and R-KB4; Finally 47 . . . R-B8 is met by 48.P-K4ch! KxP; 49.P-Q5ch! K-R4; 50.K-K3! **47 . . . K-K5; 48.R-N4,** The difference is that White does not now have 48.RxRP **48 . . . R-B8ch; 49.K-B2, R-B7ch; 50.K-K1, KxP; 51.R-N3ch, K-B5; 52.P-Q5, R-K7ch; Resigns.**

Problem 97

White to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN postmarked not later than 6 September.



Solution to Problem 95

1.NxP! wins: 1 . . . QxQ; 2.RxRch mates or 1 . . . RxR; 2.Q-K8ch or 1 . . . R-QB1; 2.QxQ, NxQ; 3.NxB, PxN; 4.R-Q8 mate.

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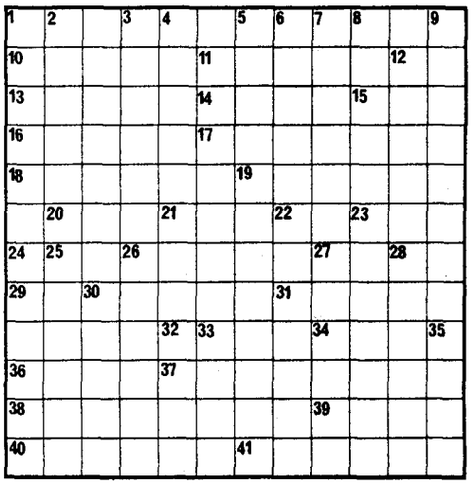
Salamanca 9: 'Black Eyes'

PRIZES. Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 9, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7HJ, by first post 5 September.



Enter answers normally although bars are not to be inscribed. To complete the puzzle solvers are asked to follow completely the sound instruction of the title.

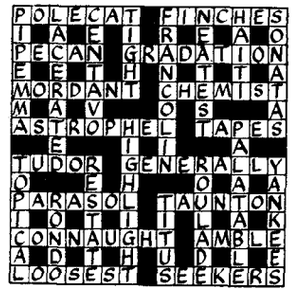
ACROSS

1. Incentive to use undersealing? (6).
7. With silence, softly sulk (4).
10. Priest's an unrestricted chatterer? (4).
11. Funny cartoon dance (7).
13. College heads mostly wandering in offices (8).
15. To say extremely (3).
16. Mystic supposing us to return here? (4).
17. Song of love one time (3).
18. Softly infiltrating other side, did this? (5).
19. Underdeveloped male squirmin' with pain, say (6).
20. 'This is war!' – leaders' leader once? (3).
21. Adherent, one mostly laughing (5).
23. How cubists suffer? (3).
24. George, not Old Testament priest (3).
26. Lead society with learned chiefs among them? They certainly didn't (5).
27. When seen in retrospect, one's a monkey (3).
29. 'Cook rice softly, add first egg . . .' – this? (6).
31. Lines meatballs lacking about inside (5).
32. Difficult describing Grundy on Thursday (3).
34. Skin-design requisites? (4).
36. A certain name in Old English (3).
37. 29's one I clued badly? What I merit? (8).
38. Doe with young, say, to communicate by waves (7).
39. Somewhat sheepish toady (4).
40. Sword ends plainly eliminating entry by tips (4).
41. Ye 'opes they burst in Scotland? (6).

DOWN

1. Seen on heads of cricketers and parading servicemen (4).
2. Miltonian chasm, in short (6).
3. Critical evaluation of second sight? (6).
4. Egg, internally round one by diameter, so? (7).
5. Indian pot many have accepted (4).
6. Rest disturbed formerly (4).
7. Cruel laming's injurious (6).
8. Bird leaving jauntily as before (5).
9. Rich Girl's cowardly feature? (8).
12. Jap gateway's height of two in Rome (5).
14. Rail about one evening do (6).
18. Mechanical stuff producing Salamanca from *both* speakers? (8).
19. Bridal 'cracks' may be (6).
22. Attribute of an old law-doctor (7).
25. Where many heads weren't better than one? (5).
26. Stick point of rapier into body (6).
27. Fluctuation in lake? Sun melting ice, eh? (6).
28. Where you were seen hatless? Same land (6).
30. Dear female about this place (5).
32. Harsh and smooth (4).
33. Which Mac uses to get fish (4).
35. Snake's timeless ladder (4).

Solution to No 1272



Prizewinners to No 1272

Joseph Tager (Amsterdam)
Laureen Bromwich (London SE5)
Alec Marshall (Whitley Bay)

APPOINTMENTS

National Council for One Parent Families

Welfare Rights Worker

The National Council for One Parent Families has a vacancy for a Welfare Rights Worker in its London based Social Work Department.

We are looking for someone with working experience of the Supplementary Benefit System and an interest in welfare law and policy. A degree or similar qualification would be considered essential.

The rights worker would advise individuals, develop tribunal representation, help compile leaflets and would be involved in departmental projects in the London area.

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For further information please contact Gordon Kyle on Durham 41122.

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SOUTHERN ARTS

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Further details from the LITERATURE OFFICER, SOUTHERN ARTS, 19 SOUTHGATE STREET, WINCHESTER, HAMPSHIRE SO23 9EB. PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE WR10.

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SOUTHERN ARTS

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Further details from the LITERATURE OFFICER, SOUTHERN ARTS ASSOCIATION, 19 SOUTHGATE STREET, WINCHESTER, HANTS SO23 9EB. PLEASE QUOTE REFERENCE L10.

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol. 96 No. 2475

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Theatres

ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company) 836 6404. Info 836 5332. Last perfs Steve Gooch's 'The Woman-Pirates ...nn Bonney and Mary Read', 'Coriolanus' ...d final perfs Strindberg's 'The Dance of ...ath'. See daily press for dates and times. ...w booking for 'As You Like It' (perfs ... 5 Sept). RSC also at The Warehouse ...te Atkin's 'A & R', David Edgar's ...ail Diary of Albie Sachs' and Peter ...ry's 'Savage Amusement'.

...ESTER 0243 81312. 25, 26, 30 & ...ust at 7.00, 2 Sept. at 2.00 'Look ...llu', 26 & 31 August at 2.00, 29 ... & 2 Sept. at 7.00 'The Aspern ...

...EAD THEATRE 722 9301. 'Be...oke', a new review with Rowan ...Elizabeth Walker & Peter Wilson. ...9. Sats. 5 & 8. 'An ideal summer ... Guardian. 'Hilarious' D. Tel.

... THEATRE 928 2252. 'Mac...e Woman', 'Plunder', 'The ...e daily press for dates and ...g recorded info: 928 2256.

...SE 267 2564 'Bartholomew ...n Jonson directed by Peter ... 8 p.m.

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Meetings

'AID AND HUMAN RIGHTS'. A meeting to be addressed by Rt Hon Judith Hart, Minister for Overseas Development, at 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday, 5 September 1978, at the Bloomsbury Centre Hotel, Coram Street, WC1. Admission by invitation, available from Bill Seary, National Council of Social Service, 26 Bedford Square, WC1. (Tel. 01-636 4066).

KRISHNAMURTI, the well-known revolutionary religious speaker and educator, will be holding public talks and discussion meetings at Brockwood Park Educational Centre, Bramdean, Nr. Alresford, Hants., at 11 a.m. on 26, 27, 29, 31 August, and 2 and 3 September. No tickets needed. For details of train and coach arrangements from London please telephone Bramdean 228.

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